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REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 2010

The New York State Avian Records Committee (hereafter "NYSARC" or the "Committee") reviewed 181 reports from 2010, involving 96 separate sightings, and an additional 18 reports from previous years. Reports were received from all over the state, with 31 of the 62 counties represented. The number of reports accompanied by photographs remains high and naturally benefits the value of the archive. The Committee wishes to remind readers that reports submitted to eBird, listserves, local bird clubs, rare bird alerts (RBAs) and even *Kingbird* Regional Editors are not necessarily passed along to NYSARC. Doing so therefore remains the responsibility of the observer(s). The growing use of the Internet and mobile phones has had a very positive impact on the timely dissemination of rare bird sightings and has made it easier for birders to locate rarities found by others. The Committee has always held that receipt of multiple independent reports provides a much fuller documentation of the sighting and can in some cases increase the likelihood of acceptance. We therefore urge ALL observers, not just the finder, to submit written reports and/or photographs. The names of the 98 contributors who submitted materials (written reports, photographs and sketches) are listed alongside accepted reports and again at the end of this document. Where possible, the name(s) of the original finder(s) is (are) included in the narratives. Production of this Annual Report is a team effort. In addition to the contributors mentioned above, several Kingbird Regional Editors have helped observers to prepare and submit documentation, and a special thanks goes to Mike Morgante (Region 1 Editor) for forwarding important documentation.

HOW TO SUBMIT REPORTS

Advice on how to prepare and submit a report is provided on the NYSARC pages within the NYSOA web site: http://nybirds.org/NYSARC/index.htm

Here, a list of species requested for review by NYSARC (The Review List) is provided along with illustrated copies of previous annual reports. The Committee is very grateful to Carena Pooth (Former NYSOA President and website administrator) for updating and continuously improving the NYSARC web site. An on-line reporting form allows observers to compose a written report and attach up to five digital image files. Documentation (written reports and photographs) and any other correspondence for the Committee can also be sent via email or regular mail to:

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420 Chili-Scottsville Road
Churchville, NY 14428
E-mail: nysarc3@nybirds.org

HIGHLIGHTS

2010 provided yet another outstanding year for rarities across NYS, adding three new species to the New York State Avian Checklist, bringing the total at year's end to 479 species. These additions were **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), **Common Ground-Dove** (*Columbina passerina*) and **Hermit Warbler** (*Setophaga occidentalis*). Other highlights included a convincing single observer sighting of a **Kirtland's Warbler** (*Setophaga kirtlandii*), which unfortunately disappeared before it could be photographed, thus precluding admission to the NYS Avian Checklist. Recognizing occasional examples of 'near-misses' like this, the Committee will now maintain a special category termed *Supplemental*. This resembles the *Hypothetical* category employed by John Bull (1976) and others but will be reserved for submissions to the archive that are fully convincing but which fall short of the rigorous requirements for full acceptance onto the Checklist. It is expected that most entries will involve similar circumstances: single observer sightings of species with a high likelihood for natural occurrence in NYS but which lack the mandated physical documentation (photographs, recordings, specimens, etc.) or independent corroboration. However, other circumstances can be imagined, for example, a bird tracked remotely using a geolocator or satellite transmitter, where the margin of error in the positioning data leaves some uncertainty as to the precise location. Readers are reminded that, when possible, reports of potential new species are now reviewed ahead of the main body of reports so that a decision can be rendered and made public as soon as possible. This new 'accelerated review' policy (NYSARC 2009, *The Kingbird* 59(3): 235) benefits everyone but relies on timely receipt of the documentation. To ensure the continued success of this endeavor, the Committee encourages observers to provide materials, especially those concerning major rarities, as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. In addition to the new species described above, the first nesting record for **Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) was carefully documented in Montgomery County.

2010 Reports Accepted

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

2010-20-A/D Five, Oneida Lake, Brewerton, **Oswego/Onondaga,** 31 May (Richard Guthrie, Kevin McGann, Bill Purcell, Thomas B. Johnson; ph R. Guthrie, B. Purcell, T. B. Johnson)

2010-46-A/H One, west side of Route 77, Tonawanda WMA, **Genesee,** 11-22 Aug (Gerald S. Lazarczyk, William W. Watson, Will Stuart, Willie D'Anna, Paul Hess, James Pawlicki, Jim Landau, Jim Wojewodzki; ph W. W. Watson, W. Stuart, W. D'Anna, P. Hess, J. Wojewodzki)

2010-78-A One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 31 Jul & 2 Aug (Andrew Baksh; ph A. Baksh)

After several sightings of this species in NYS involving lone individuals, some with evidence of past captivity, the Committee (and birding community as a whole) was thrilled to receive a series of well-documented Black-bellied

Whistling-Duck reports involving seven individuals. The documentation was supported in every case by color photographs, and the Oneida Lake birds, first found by Jim Vrooman, may well have been the same group of five photographed a day earlier in Dauphin Co., Pennsylvania on 30 May 2010. The Jamaica Bay bird was first identified by Anne Lazarus, while the Tonawanda duck (see p. 147) was spotted independently on 11 Aug by Will Stuart and Jill Palmer and then by Paul Hess. Whistling-Ducks, including this species, are very popular with waterfowl collectors and traditionally pose problems for Committee acceptance, especially when a lone and relatively tame individual is involved. The nagging specter of escapes has left a question mark over several plausible candidates in the past. That the three 2010 sightings involved relatively skittish birds showing no evidence of prior captivity (leg bands, clipped nails, etc.), coincided with a major incursion into neighboring states, and involved a group of five birds made it easier for the Committee to accept this series of reports as involving genuine vagrants. As such, and starting with the five birds on Oneida Lake, these constitute the first records for NYS. A brief announcement to this effect was published in *The Kingbird* Vol. 61 (2): 132.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

2010-9-A/E One, Forestal Flats & Ring-necked Marsh, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, **Orleans,** and Johnson Creek Road, Hartland, **Niagara**, 17-27 Mar (William W. Watson, Willie D'Anna, David R. Wheeler; ph W. D'Anna)

2010-82-A/C One, Pelham Bay Beach, **Bronx**, 26-27 Nov (Keith Michael, Jack Rothman, Shari Zirlin; ph K. Michael, J. Rothman, S. Zirlin)

These two records of Barnacle Goose reflect the steady change in the frequency of occurrence of this European species and the perception of its status in terms of natural versus unnatural origins. As discussed in previous Annual Reports, the Greenland-breeding population continues to grow with what seems to be a corresponding increase in the number of sightings in northeastern North America. This correlation has reinforced the belief of many that most recent sightings of this species refer to genuine wild vagrants, although escapes most certainly also occur. Although the broader trend seems clear, discerning natural versus unnatural origins with regard to individual geese remains a challenge. Records Committees are generally conservative when making these types of decisions, but one has only to look at recent Annual Reports from this Committee to see a growing number of unqualified acceptances. As if to validate this exciting trend, 2010 produced the first NYS record of a Barnacle Goose that had been banded as a wild bird in its main range. This highly significant individual was discovered by Keith Michael at Pelham Bay Park in the outskirts of New York City on 26 Nov. It had an injured left foot that caused it to limp badly and carried three bands, a metal band which could be read from photographs (British Museum London SW7 1291347), a white unmarked plastic band and a white Darvic band with the letters VUB in black (see p. 147 for photos showing the band combination and numbers). Jack Rothman shared these details with the European Union for Bird Ringing (*www.euring.org),* which quickly confirmed that this individual was marked by Steve Percival on Islay, Scotland on 13 Nov 2002. Islay, on the west coast of Scotland, is a major

wintering site for Greenland Barnacle Geese. The goose had returned to Islay each year until 2005, when it vanished. To the chagrin of goose enthusiasts, the Bronx bird did not linger but was later sighted in Connecticut. This is only the third North American record of a Barnacle Goose banded in Europe, following band recoveries by hunters in Newfoundland and Ontario (Sherony 2008), and provides the strongest evidence for natural vagrancy to NYS.

The other 2010 Barnacle Goose record was of a bird that was discovered by Peter Yoerg in Orleans County at Iroquois NWR. Later a bird that is likely to be the same individual was found by Willie D'Anna as he led a field trip in Niagara Co. Inland sightings such as this latter bird always receive closer scrutiny than reports from the coast, where there is a clearer relationship to the Atlantic flyway. The Iroquois NWR Barnacle Goose was seen to have all of its flight feathers and was not banded or marked in any way as to suggest the possibility of an escape. These critical details, combined with the cumulating evidence for natural vagrancy into the northeast, including the eastern portion of the Great Lakes, proved sufficient for acceptance by the Committee.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2010-3-A/D One male, Ausable Point, Valcour, **Clinton**, 25-27 Feb (Thomas B. Johnson, William E. Krueger, Shawn Billerman, Bill Purcell; ph T. B. Johnson, S. Billerman)

On February 19, Pat Jones discovered a male Tufted Duck at Ausable Point on the western shore of Lake Champlain. This bird was seen associating with a mixed flock of diving ducks and occasionally fed near the shore, affording good views for the numerous observers who found it subsequently. According to Bill Krueger, the duck remained until at least 21 Mar. Two reports, one from Tom Johnson and the other from Shawn Billerman, provided digiscoped photographs to accompany the written descriptions. Tufted Duck is a fascinating example of a Eurasian species that was added to the NYS Checklist relatively recently (1955) but quickly became an annual visitor. Indeed it was sufficiently frequent in coastal New York that it no longer required NYSARC review. However, this trend has reversed in recent years, with far fewer coastal records and, if anything, an increase in Upstate NY, especially the eastern half of the state.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

2010-22-A One alternate plumage, Cupsogue CP, **Suffolk,** 24 May (Jay McGowan)

The sharp eyes of Jay McGowan and Andrew Van Norstrand spotted a Pacific Loon at Cupsogue CP on eastern Long Island flying east along the beach with a group of five Common Loons (*G. immer*). They were able to get two photographs showing the white braces on the upper surface of the wings. The photos also show the contrast in the size of this bird compared to the larger Common Loons and the different head shape. Although Pacific Loons are being reported with increasing frequency in New England, most notably around Block Island, Rhode Island, this increase has not manifested itself on eastern Long Island, where the species remains a major rarity. A black-and-white photograph by Jay McGowan was published in *North American Birds* 64(3):397.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)
2010-5-A/B One, Jacob Riis Park, **Queens**, 28 Feb, (Seth Ausubel, Doug Gochfeld; ph D. Gochfeld)
2010-6-A/B One, Chimney Bluffs, east side of Sodus Bay, Lake Ontario, **Wayne**, 14 & 21 Mar (Thomas B. Johnson, William W. Watson)
Western Grebe sightings have become annual in the past decade, and in 2010 two were reported. The first was found by Seth Ausubel and seen from the fishermen's parking lot of Riis Park on 28 Feb. The description included details of the bill color and head pattern that identified it as a Western Grebe, rather than Clark's Grebe (*A. clarkii*), which has not yet been recorded in NYS. On 11 Mar, Chuck Gibson found the second individual off Chimney Bluffs SP, Lake Ontario. An eBird report alerted other birders, and it was re-found in the same general location and last reported on 21 Mar. This bird was seen by several groups and was well described, thus eliminating Clark's Grebe.

White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*)
2010-29-A One, 101 nm SSE of Shinnecock Inlet [39°27'41.22"N, -71°12'56.88"W], **Pelagic**, 12 Jun (John Shemilt; ph J. Shemilt)
2010-56-A One, 72 nm SSE of Shinnecock Inlet [39°55'10.88"N, -71°22'13.91"W], **Pelagic**, 11 Sep (Angus Wilson)
It is likely that White-faced Storm-Petrel occurs with regularity in summer and early fall over the outer reaches of NYS pelagic waters, especially the areas of upwelling along the continental shelf break and the outer portions of the major submarine canyons. During the summer of 2010, John Shemilt and companions found two individuals during offshore fishing trips around the mouth of Block Canyon and beyond the shelf edge. Both birds proved less than cooperative, staying in view for less than a minute before disappearing along the wave troughs. Fortunately, this is a very distinctive storm-petrel and brief views are usually enough to rule out other species that can be confusing, such as phalaropes and more often than not, flying fish. In the case of the individual found on 12 Jun, the 45 seconds or so that it was in view proved enough time for Shemilt to obtain several definitive photos, but the 11 Sep bird vanished so quickly that it was documented by written description only.

Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)
2010-31-A Total of 53 birds, at or beyond 500-fathom contour, 78-105nm SSE of Shinnecock Inlet, **Pelagic**, 12 Jun (John Shemilt; ph J. Shemilt)
Our understanding of the status of Leach's Storm-Petrel in NYS pelagic waters is a work-in-progress. Until a few years ago the species was not recorded every year, and the majority of records referred to storm-blown individuals rather than at-sea sightings. This has always seemed strange given that the bulk of the Atlantic population nests in eastern Canada—there are four million pairs nesting in Newfoundland alone (Robertson et al. 2006)—and that this species is encountered off Massachusetts on a regular basis in the warmer months. Hints of a change have come from the regular observations of John Shemilt during fishing trips to the shelf-edge and deep canyons, especially in the productive areas towards the eastern boundary of the NYS pelagic waters. This report

describes an offshore trip in early Jun during which Shemilt, Craig Corcoran and Keegan Corcoran encountered small groups of Leach's Storm-Petrels over a relatively wide area, either in flight or as rafts of up to 12 birds roosting on the water. The running count, which Shemilt considered a conservative one, came to 53 birds. A few birds were seen around the 500-fathom contour, with the rest over much deeper water (>1000 fathoms). Some 15 or more individuals were photographed and 13 representative images (out of more than 100) were submitted. These clearly support the identification, firmly ruling out both Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) and Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*). Based on small details such as worn primary feathers, these document multiple individuals. It will take a few more seasons of observation to determine whether this is a sustained or temporary phenomenon.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

2010-35-A/B One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 20-25 Jul (Arie Gilbert, Doug Gochfeld; ph D. Gochfeld)

2010-95-A One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 13 Aug (Walter Beattie, ph W. Beattie)

American White Pelican is a scarce migrant to Upstate NY, where most records are from the spring, but is significantly more unusual in coastal NY. The two reports received in 2010 occurred just north of and on the East Pond, respectively, at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge on the outskirts of New York City. The first bird was seen and photographed by Doug Gochfeld in late Jul and was followed by a second individual on 13 Aug that was found among the resident Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) on the East Pond by Jean Loscalzo, this latter bird remaining on the East Pond at least to late Sep.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*)

2010-48-A/C One immature, Dunkirk Harbor, **Chautauqua**, 9 & 15 Aug (William W. Watson, Gerald S. Lazarczyk, James Pawlicki; ph W. W. Watson, J. Pawlicki)

This immature night-heron was found and identified by the late David Neveu, one of Chautauqua Co.'s most active birders. Neveu discovered many interesting birds over the years and readily shared them with others. The descriptions and photographs conclusively rule out immature Black-crowned Night-Heron (N. *nycticorax*). Due to a sustained increase in the numbers of Upstate sightings and perhaps reflecting a general expansion of more southerly species into the Northeast, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron has been removed from the NYSARC Review List statewide.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*)

2010-12-A One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Kings**, South Marsh, **Queens**, 26 Apr (Doug Gochfeld; ph D. Gochfeld)

2010-23-A/B One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 13-23 May (Jay McGowan, Doug Gochfeld; ph J. McGowan, D. Gochfeld)

White-faced Ibis has become nearly annual in the state, and Jamaica Bay remains the epicenter of reports. In 2010, an adult bird was found in the South Marsh on 26 Apr by Shane Blodgett, and after a hiatus of two-plus weeks an

adult was subsequently seen by many observers around the West Pond in mid- to late-May. Doug Gochfeld, who saw and submitted reports on both birds, felt that they were identifiable as separate individuals based on differences in the white facial feathering, and the Committee agreed with this assessment based on the submitted photographs. These are the 13th and 14th records accepted by NYSARC since 1979.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

2010-26-A/C Three, two adults and one juvenile, Mapletown Rd, Root, **Montgomery**, 13 Jun-28 Aug (Jesse W. Jaycox, Arie Gilbert, Richard Guthrie; ph J. W. Jaycox, A. Gilbert, R. Guthrie)

2010-41-A One adult, Henshaw Rd, Ithaca, **Tompkins**, 2 May (Christopher L. Wood)

2010-47-A One, Staten Island, New York, **Richmond**, 4 Jul (Anthony Ciancimino)

2010-55-A One immature, Derby Hill, **Oswego**, 3 Sep (Bill Purcell; ph B. Purcell)

A pair of Mississippi Kites returned to the area of mixed woods and farmland near Root in Montgomery Co. where they had summered in 2009. Jesse Jaycox, Rich Guthrie and others provided detailed documentation on the arrival and behavior of the pair, culminating in the discovery of a nest and a single fledgling. On 13 Jun the adults were observed engaged in mating behavior and frequented the immediate area over the next two months, during which time the pair was seen by many additional birders. Visiting on 11 Aug, Rich and Andy Guthrie could hear begging calls coming from a woodlot located on private property some yards from the road, suggestive of an active nest. This suspicion was vindicated on 20 Aug, when Rich Guthrie and the landowner observed a fledgling perched in a tree and being fed by the adults. Photographs and video footage documenting the fledgling were obtained (see p. 146). Jaycox made a similar observation the next day. On 28 Aug, and again accompanied by the landowner, Jaycox discovered and photographed the nest in a sugar maple tree. They watched the adults bringing food to the youngster either at the nest itself or a short distance away in the neighboring trees (see p. 146). This constitutes the first nesting record of Mississippi Kite in NYS and one of only a handful in the Northeast. Interestingly, a sub-adult kite was also present on several occasions although documentation on this third bird was not submitted for review. Yearling Mississippi Kites are often tolerated by nesting pairs within their territories and often help with nest guarding and even incubation. Evidently this enhances nesting success and is most frequent at the northern edges of the range, a study in Illinois finding helpers at 14 of 16 nests (Parker 1999). The genetic relationship between yearling helpers and the adults is unknown, and thus it is unclear if subadults seen in Root (also in 2009) are necessarily offspring from a previous season. Hopefully the kites will continue to use this territory in future years, and visiting birders are urged to respect the strict privacy of the woodlot owner and other local residents.

Besides this nesting pair, three additional sightings were accepted. The first, an adult, was seen on 2 May in Tompkins Co. by Chris Wood and is consistent with a spring migrant. On 2 Jul, Antonio Ciancimino observed an adult perched and hawking insects in a wooded area of Staten Island. The lone fall report was an immature photographed at Derby Hill on 3 Sep by Bill Purcell. Fall

Mississippi Kites are relatively rare in NYS, with only one previous fall record (NYSARC 2001-45-A). The increased number of spring reports together with the breeding pair reflects the general increase in sightings of Mississippi Kite in the northeastern US. This follows a range expansion up the Mississippi Valley that began in the late 1990s.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
2010-14-A One sub adult intermediate or light morph, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 3 Apr (Andy Guthrie; sketch A. Guthrie)
Swainson's Hawks are seen almost annually in spring from the Braddock Bay and/or Derby Hill Hawk Watches, but unfortunately details are rarely submitted to NYSARC. Provision of this detailed report helps fill the deficit, substantiating the near-annual spring passage of one or two Swainson's Hawks along the south shore of Lake Ontario. In this case, the observer provided a valuable sketch that helped document the overall shape, flight style, and plumage.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)
2010-51-A One, Tonawanda WMA, **Genesee**, 22 May (Mike Morgante)
The grunt call of a King Rail was heard emanating from a cattail marsh by Mike Morgante. Although the bird was neither seen nor recorded, the description of the call and explanation of how Virginia Rail (*R. limicola*) was ruled out were convincing to the Committee. Morgante was following up on reports by others of a King Rail heard calling from this location. Although reports are infrequent, it is conceivable the species might breed on occasion in high quality wetlands, such as those found at Tonawanda WMA.

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)
2010-53-A One, Borden Road, West Seneca, **Erie**, 26 Apr (Matt Zymanek)
Most documented records of Yellow Rail in NYS are of hunting specimens taken many decades ago. Although the species may still be a regular fall migrant through the state, its secretive habits make it unlikely to be encountered in the field by knowledgeable birders. This individual was found on a residential street in suburban West Seneca. The bird appeared to be in poor health and was taken to a bird rehabilitation facility, where it soon died. The facility manager, Matt Zymanek, photographed the bird at the request of *Kingbird* Regional Editor Mike Morgante and submitted the photos for the permanent record. This is the second consecutive year with a record for NYS; in the fall of 2009 a live bird was temporarily restrained by a dog in the Goetchius Preserve, Tompkins Co., (NYSARC 2009-65-A).

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*)
2010-16-A One, Sag Pond, Sagaponack, Bridgehampton, **Suffolk**, 21 May (Angus Wilson; ph A. Wilson)
2010-42-A One, West End, Jones Beach SP, **Nassau**, 8 May (Andrew Baksh; ph A. Baksh)
Andrew Baksh discovered and photographed the first Wilson's Plover of 2010 at Jones Beach SP on 8 May and, despite the windy conditions, a number of

birders were able to see it over a five-hour period; and, after a week's apparent absence, this plover was seen again at the same location on the 15th. A week later, Angus Wilson discovered a Wilson's Plover at the end of Sag Pond on 21 May, about 60 miles east of the first sighting. Although both plovers were photographed and are similar in appearance, it was not possible to make a categorical statement as to whether one or two birds were involved. These sightings are typical of this species, appearing along the Atlantic seafront in late spring or early summer but not lingering.

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)

2010-50-A One juvenile, Montezuma NWR, Towpath Road, **Seneca,** 22 Aug (Christopher L. Wood; ph C. L. Wood)

This juvenile Western Sandpiper was found among many Semipalmated Sandpipers (*C. pusilla*) at Montezuma NWR. It was considered most likely to be a female based on the very long bill. In addition to the bill, the bright rufous scapulars, paler head, and other more subtle details that fully support the identification were noted in the written report and are evident in the photographs. Western Sandpipers are quite rare in inland regions of NYS but are likely of annual occurrence and are an uncommon but expected migrant in fall and even winter in coastal areas. At the 2011 NYSARC Annual Meeting, the Committee voted to remove this species from the review list for Upstate NYS in fall only. Any spring sightings should still be submitted.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

2010-54-A One juvenile, Knox-Marcellus Marsh, Towpath Road, Montezuma NWR, **Seneca** 6 Sept (Shawn Billerman; ph S. Billerman)

2010-60-A One juvenile, Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant, Batavia, **Genesee**, 18 Oct (William W. Watson; ph W.W. Watson)

Once among the most frequent vagrant shorebirds in NYS, especially at coastal sites, Ruff has become much less frequent and is now barely annual. Interestingly, juveniles are significantly under-represented in eastern North America, prompting speculation that most sightings along the Atlantic Seaboard refer to birds that have wintered in South America and traveled northwards. By comparison, juveniles are better represented among Ruff sightings on the West Coast. These two inland reports involve juveniles and could pertain to the same individual, however, the wide separation in both space and time led the Committee to consider it more likely that there were two different birds. The Montezuma Ruff was found and identified by Tim Lenz. Shawn Billerman provided a detailed report with convincing photos. This bird was last reported on 18 Sep and presumably continued its south or southeast-bound migration. Exactly one month later, Bill Watson found and photographed a juvenile Ruff at the Batavia WWTP. Constrained by a 3 p.m. closing time at the plant, only three birders got to see this bird, which was gone the following day.

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*)

2010-4-A/D One adult, Lake Champlain at Rouses Point, **Clinton**, 21-28 Feb (Bernard Carr, Thomas B. Johnson, Bill Purcell, Shawn Billerman; ph T. B. Johnson, S. Billerman)

On 19 Feb Pat Jones discovered an adult Ivory Gull feeding on a fish carcass on the Vermont side of a causeway across the northern end of Lake Champlain. Subsequently, the gull was relocated on the ice off Rouses Point in NYS, where it remained for almost two weeks to 2 Mar, to the delight of many observers. It was likely attracted to the area by the concentration of ice fisherman and the easy food that it could obtain there. Recent years have seen a noticeable uptick in the number of records of this high-arctic gull well to the south of its normal winter range, raising concerns about the health and future of the population. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

2010-66-A/B One basic-plumaged adult, Captree SP, **Suffolk**, 27 Oct (Shaibal S. Mitra, Patricia J. Lindsay; ph S. S. Mitra)

2010-77-A One first basic, Hamlin Beach SP, **Monroe**, 25 Sept (Dominic Sherony; ph Andy Guthrie)

2010-97-A One, Iron Pier Beach, Riverhead, **Suffolk**, 12 Dec (Paul H. Gillen, Jr.)

The Committee received three reports of Franklin's Gull, including two from Long Island, where the species is very rare. The first report of the season involved an immature in first-basic plumage discovered and photographed by Andy Guthrie at Hamlin Beach SP on 25 Sep. This was followed by a basic-plumaged adult in the parking lot at Captree SP on 27 Oct that was found and photographed by Patricia Lindsay and Shai Mitra. They had been searching (unsuccessfully) for a first-basic Franklin's Gull found hours earlier by Ken Feustel at nearby Robert Moses SP. Unfortunately details of this additional bird were not submitted for review and archiving, but this suggests a small incursion onto the coast. Finally, Paul Gillen found a basic-plumaged bird among the Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) and American Herring Gulls (L. *argentatus smithsonianus*) visiting a stream outlet at Iron Pier Beach on the North Fork of Long Island. During the 1970s and -80s, Franklin's Gull was annual in the fall along the Niagara River, but it has become increasingly rare statewide since then.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)

2010-1-A/D One adult, Niagara River, **Niagara**, 6-7 Jan (William W. Watson, James Pawlicki, Jean Iron, Kevin McLaughlin; ph J. Pawlicki, J. Iron, Brad Carlson)

2010-7-A One adult, Playland Park, Rye, **Westchester**, 14 Mar (Thomas W. Burke; ph Gail Benson, T. W. Burke)

2010-32-A/B One definitive basic, Niagara River, **Niagara**, 1 Jan (Willie D'Anna, Jean Iron; ph J. Iron)

For the second consecutive year, NYSARC has accepted three records of Mew Gull. Most records along the Atlantic coast pertain to the European subspecies (*L. c. canus*, "Common Gull",) while those inland are usually of the North American race (*L. c. brachyrhynchus*). In general, this division is also reflected in the distribution of NYS records. However, the Niagara River bird (2010-1-A/D) represents the first fully accepted record of "Common Gull" away from coastal regions in the state. This bird, first spotted by Dean DiTommaso along with Jean Iron and Kevin McLaughlin, was exceptionally well documented by

excellent descriptions and photographs (see p. 146), including shots of the spread wing, a very important detail for subspecies identification. About a week earlier, Betsy Potter, alongside other Niagara River gull-watchers, discovered a *brachyrhynchus* Mew Gull (2010-32-A/B). Two Mew Gulls on the Niagara River within a week is unprecedented. A third Mew Gull was found along the Long Island Sound coast at Playland Park in Rye, Westchester Co., by Tom Burke and Gail Benson. The description and photographs support subspecific identification as nominate "Common Gull".

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

2010-69-A/C One definitive basic, Niagara River off Goat Island, Niagara Falls, **Niagara**, 31 Oct, 5 Nov, 4 Dec (William W. Watson, Willie D'Anna, James Pawlicki; ph W. D'Anna)

Although California Gull has been reported nearly annually on the Niagara River since 1991, most sightings are from the power plants, situated downriver from Niagara Falls. There are very few prior records from Goat Island, at the brink of Niagara Falls on the NYS side, where this bird was discovered by James Pawlicki on 29 Oct. The gull was seen resting in the shallows off of Goat Island with American Herring Gulls (L. *argentatus smithsonianus*), affording excellent close views and photographs. A third basic California Gull was seen in the same area in 2009 (2009-62-A/B), and the observers speculated that this might be the same individual, now advanced into adult plumage.

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*)

2010-93-A One definitive basic, Niagara River off Goat Island, **Niagara**, 31 Oct (Willie D'Anna; ph W. D'Anna)

As with the California Gull above, this Thayer's Gull was discovered by Andy Guthrie at Goat Island, above Niagara Falls, allowing for relatively close study and photographs. Multiple Thayer's Gulls are reported on the Niagara River every year, but few are documented, in part because they are most often seen on the Canadian side of the river and also because documentation is difficult due to the viewing distance involved. In this example, the details of the wingtip pattern, bill size, overall structure, and description of the mantle as slightly darker than that of an American Herring Gull (*L. argentatus smithsonianus*) adequately ruled out the latter, and more importantly excluded the dark end of the Kumlein's Iceland Gull (*L. glaucoides kumlieni*) spectrum.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

2010-21-A One adult, Cupsogue CP, **Suffolk**, 23 May (Shaibal S. Mitra; ph S. S. Mitra)

2010-33-A One near adult, Cupsogue CP, **Suffolk**, 10 Jul (Shaibal S. Mitra; ph S. S. Mitra)

2010-37-A One first summer, Cupsogue CP, **Suffolk**, 6 Jun (Shaibal S. Mitra; ph S. S. Mitra)

2010-38-A One second summer, Cupsogue CP, **Suffolk**, 6 Jun (Shaibal S. Mitra; ph S. S. Mitra)

Shai Mitra has done a multi-year study of Arctic Terns on Long Island and compared his own records with published information for the eastern US (Mitra

2009). The Committee received another series of excellent reports and accompanying photographs carefully documenting multiple Arctic Terns from the sand flats just east of the Moriches Inlet. He has found that the timing and age distribution of Arctic Terns on Long Island is inconsistent with previous viewpoints, namely that the majority of sightings occur in June and early July and generally involve immature birds.

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

2010-24-A One first summer, Cupsogue CP, **Suffolk**, 6 Jun (Shaibal S. Mitra; ph S. S. Mitra)

2010-36-A One, Cupsogue CP, **Suffolk**, 18 Jul (Doug Gochfeld; ph D. Gochfeld)

These two sightings of Sandwich Tern represent the 8th and 9th records accepted by NYSARC since 2004, compared with only three prior to that. Shai Mitra's report of a first-summer individual from Cupsogue on 6 Jun included a thorough description and an excellent photo of the Sandwich Tern next to a Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). Doug Gochfeld's discovery and subsequent report of another first-summer bird from the same area six weeks later was accompanied by several photos and a description that left no doubt about the identification. The bird was an exciting highlight for the eager participants on a NYS Young Birders Club field trip co-lead by Gochfeld.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

2010-30-A One, 95 nmi SSE of Shinnecock Inlet, **Pelagic**, 12 Jun (John Shemilt; ph J. Shemilt)

2010-43-A One juvenile, Myers Point, Cayuga Lake, **Tompkins**, 26 Aug (Christopher L. Wood; ph C. L. Wood)

2010-96-A Three, one light morph and two intermediate, Derby Hill Observatory, **Oswego**, 19 Oct (Kevin McGann; ph Bill Purcell)

Documentation of five Long-tailed Jaegers in a year is unusual for NYS and is perhaps a reflection of better knowledge of what to look for among area birders and improved abilities to capture images that support the identification. John Shemilt's excellent series of photographs documented an immature at sea off eastern Long Island. Based on the plumage and mid-summer date, it is most likely this bird was hatched in the previous summer. The juvenile at Cayuga Lake was also well documented by Chris Wood with excellent photographs and convincing discussion of the identification. More remarkable perhaps was the report of three Long-tailed Jaegers on Lake Ontario seen from Derby Hill on the comparatively late date of 19 Oct. The report from Kevin McGann was accompanied by photographs taken by Bill Purcell. Although these birds were seen at a much greater distance than the summer examples, the solid written description and supporting photographs were sufficiently compelling to the Committee.

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)

2010-17-A One, Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Brooklyn, **Kings**, 19 Jan (Doug Gochfeld; ph D. Gochfeld)

The only Thick-billed Murre report received this year was one off the beach front in Coney Island, Brooklyn, on 19 Jan, initially found by Rob Jett and Heydi Lopes, and seen by several others during the day, including Doug Gochfeld, who submitted the report with supporting photographs. This is the eleventh record accepted by NYSARC since 2000, and the second in Kings Co., and New York City as a whole, during this same period.

Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)

2010-15-A Four, **Pelagic**, 21 April (Angus Wilson; ph A. Wilson)

2010-87-A Two first winter, **Pelagic**, 17 Jan (Paul A. Guris, ph P. A. Guris, Andrew R. Curtis)

2010-92-A Thirty-five, **Pelagic**, 11 Dec (Angus Wilson; ph A. Wilson)

Atlantic Puffins have been found on a regular basis in offshore waters by observers able to reach warm enough water in the winter and spring seasons. This year Atlantic Puffins were found on three separate trips. One set of observations, by Angus Wilson and John Shemilt, was notable given the comparatively late date of 21 Apr and provided an interesting mix of species, including a very early Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*). Of the four puffins seen, one was only 31 miles offshore. The other two submissions reflected more traditional dates, with two first-winter birds seen on a pelagic trip organized by See Life Paulagics, and a good count of 35 by Wilson and Shemilt on 11 Dec.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

2010-34-A/B One, private residence, Rochester, **Monroe**, 19-24 Jul (Cindy Marino, Dominic Sherony; ph D. Sherony)

2010-75-A One, Westhampton Beach, **Suffolk**, 15-20 Nov (Irina Richardson; ph I. Richardson)

Cindy Marino originally found the Rochester dove while it was calling from the roof of her home in midsummer. The setting is a much-wooded residential street parallel to the Irondequoit Creek basin. This shy unbanded bird would not allow close approach but was photographed and seen by a number of observers during its almost six week stay to 28 Aug. The Long Island bird was found by Irina Richardson in her back yard and remained for at least six days. She was able to take diagnostic photos.

Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)

2010-68-A/G One, Captree SP, **Suffolk**, 31 Oct-21 Nov (Shaibal S. Mitra, Jason Silverman, Kevin McGann, Angus Wilson, Shawn Billerman, Dominic Sherony, Patricia J. Lindsay; ph S. S. Mitra, J. Silverman, K. McGann, S. Billerman, D. Sherony)

While checking the grassy margins of the parking lot at Captree for migrants, Patricia Lindsay and Shai Mitra came upon this Common Ground-Dove. They recognized the bird immediately through a combination of its tiny size (approximating a Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*), pinkish breast, scaly nape and breast and its unmarked back. In flight, the spread wings showed a large area of rusty-red, hints of which could be seen when the bird was at rest. The Ground-Dove was not banded and showed nothing to suggest an escaped cage bird. Lindsay and Mitra carefully backed their car away from the bird before

alerting other birders by cell phone. Some 30 or more people viewed the dove that day, and it is likely that several hundred people came during the three weeks that it remained. Sometimes the bird hid in deep cover, but with patience most visitors were rewarded with good views. Many photographs were taken and regular updates on the bird were posted to the local listserves. The Committee was pleased to receive a packet of seven reports, including 13 instructive color photos—for once a bundle worthy of a well-watched first state record!

Common Ground-Dove has long been considered a strong candidate for addition to the NYS avifauna. Prior to 2010, there were two accepted records from neighboring New Jersey (Camden, specimen Nov 1858, and Higbee Beach, Cape May, sight record 4 Sep 1984), as well as two additional reports that were not accepted (Oct 1935, late-1961). More recently, there are records from East Haven, CT (22 Oct-22 Nov 2007) and Nummy Island, Cape May Co., NJ (6 Oct 2009; NJBRC decision pending). The species has been recorded in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts (Monomoy Island, 7 Oct 1973), Ontario and Nova Scotia (Shelburne Co., 10 Oct 1966). Several publications, including *Birds of North America* (Bowman 2002), state that the species is recorded from NYS, but this is unsubstantiated. Bull (1976) dismissed a specimen mentioned in Griscom (1923) from Manhattan (date unknown), saying that it was not examined by an ornithologist and is now lost.

The discovery of the Captree SP Ground-Dove coincided with the arrival of other southern vagrants into the Northeast. Several Cave Swallows (*Petrochelidon fulva*) were noted in coastal regions a few days before, as well as in nearby Connecticut on the day of its discovery. There had also been an unusual influx of Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) into the region, with some 7-10 on Long Island alone. On the same day a Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) was found further east near Montauk (NYSARC 2010-74-A). More significantly perhaps, at least three extralimital Common Ground-Doves were found during the preceding 10-day period: Richfield, MN (18-19 Oct), Whitefish Point, MI (20-21 Oct) and Cape May Point SP, NJ. (29 Oct). This hints at a broad movement of birds towards the north and then northeast. In evaluating these reports the Committee found that the identification was clearly established and that there was a high expectation of vagrancy into NYS. Although many species of dove from Mexico and Central America are kept in captivity, the timing of the discovery, the scarcity of this particular species in captivity and the fact that it was found on the barrier beach, a classic site for vagrants, left no concerns about unnatural origins. This therefore constitutes the first record for NYS. A brief note announcing this addition to the NYS Avian Checklist was published in *The Kingbird* 61(2):132. Photographs by Andrew Baksh and Corey Finger appear in *The Kingbird* 61(1): 51.

Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*)

2010-2-A/C One, Prospect Street, Champlain, **Clinton**, 20 Jan-28 Feb (Donna Gooley, Thomas B. Johnson, Gerald S. Lazarczyk; ph D. Gooley, T. B. Johnson, G. S. Lazarczyk) This Northern Hawk Owl provided a typical record of a long-staying individual that maintained a small territory. Throughout its stay, the owl perched on

treetops and utility wires along a rural road, affording excellent views of its fascinating hunting behavior. Interestingly, this location was close to the area used in the previous winter by another or perhaps the same Northern Hawk Owl (NYSARC 2008-79-A/I).

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

2010-64-A/C One female, private residence, Ballston Lake, **Saratoga**, 5-28 Oct (Will Raup, Karl Hillig, Richard Guthrie; ph Danika Raup, K. Hillig, R. Guthrie)

This female *Selasphorus* hummingbird was a regular visitor to Karl Hillig's hummingbird feeder for most of October up to 2 Nov. After hearing a request on a radio show for information about late-season hummingbirds, Karl contacted local birders and graciously allowed many visitors to watch the hummingbird from his porch. Among the visitors was Bob Yunick, who captured the hummingbird and identified it as an immature female Rufous Hummingbird based on tail measurements.

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)

2010-67-A/M One adult, private residence, Livonia, **Ontario,** 30 Oct-2 Mar 2011 (Fred A. Jordan, Jean Bub, Carolyn Jacobs, Bill Purcell, Will Raup, Gerald S. Lazarczyk, Willie D'Anna, Kevin McGann, Dominic Sherony, Angus Wilson, Shawn Billerman, William W. Watson, Charles C. Spagnoli; ph F. A. Jordan, B. Purcell, W. Raup, W. D'Anna, K. McGann, D. Sherony, S. Billerman, W. W. Watson)

This Lewis's Woodpecker appeared at Fred and Eleanor Jordan's feeders on 30 Oct and remained through the winter, with regular sightings until at least 7 May 2011. During this stay scores of birders were able to see and photograph this woodpecker, making this a particularly well-documented rarity. "King Lewis", as nicknamed by the Jordans, aggressively defended the feeders against larger visitors such as Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) and other woodpeckers. With a dependable food source, the bird visibly gained weight and appeared much healthier than when it first arrived. This is the 5th documented report of Lewis's Woodpecker for NYS. Color photographs by Fred Jordan and Brad Carlson were published in *The Kingbird* 61(1):49 and 61(2):149.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

2010-27-A One, Gosnell Big Woods Preserve, Webster, **Monroe**, 19 Jun (Tim Constas, Jr.; ph T. Constas)

It had been six years since the last Upstate sighting of Western Kingbird was accepted (downstate reports are not reviewed). This year's report included no description and just a single small photo. The bird was identified second-hand from the photo and the photographer graciously submitted the report. The Committee was at first uncomfortable with this sighting due to identification issues with similar yellow-bellied kingbirds as well as the possibility of a hybrid, a relatively frequent occurrence with this species. In the end they felt that the photo was more suggestive of Western than other yellow-bellied kingbird candidates (Cassin's (*T. vociferans*), Tropical (*T. melancholicus*), or Couch's (*T. couchii*)) and that Western was easily the most likely species, so the vote was to accept. Although this particular record eventually passed, the

Committee urges submitters to provide as much detail as possible in order to avoid the possibility that legitimate records fail to pass. NYSARC has accepted only four prior spring records of Western Kingbird. The dates of these were 13 Apr 1992, 25 May 2001, 19 Jun 1998, and 28 Jun 2003.

Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*)

2010-58-A One, May's Point & East Road, Savannah, **Seneca**, 25 Sep (Jeff J. Doyle)

2010-61-A/C One, Seneca Street, Savannah, **Wayne**, 23 Oct (Dominic Sherony, Benjamin Van Doren, Jacob Drucker; ph D. Sherony, B. Van Doren)

The surprising find of an unusual tyrant flycatcher on a power line near Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge on 24 Sep led Jeff and Jane Doyle to investigate its identity and determine that this was in fact a Gray Kingbird. Although not a very detailed report, several features mentioned do point to this vagrant from Southern Florida, the Bahamas and the Caribbean. News of the find was posted, but unfortunately the bird could not be relocated. However, another sighting of a Gray Kingbird was reported about five miles away in the town of Savannah a month later and was seen by about a dozen people and photographed. As in the previous case, this bird was only viewed for about two hours, after which it disappeared and could not be relocated despite extensive searching. Although it is not certain, it is quite possible that these sightings refer to the same bird.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

2010-40-A/B One adult, Sycamore Street, Vestal, **Broome**, 13-16 Aug (Dan Watkins, Christopher L. Wood; ph D. Watkins, C. L. Wood)

2010-83-A One, Jones Beach SP, **Nassau**, 31 Oct & 27 Nov (Shaibal S. Mitra; ph S.S. Mitra)

The Broome County Loggerhead Shrike, discovered by Dan Watkins, was a molting adult present for just a few days in August and documented with excellent photos. The Jones Beach shrike was more problematic, and in fact was initially identified as a Northern Shrike (*L. excubitor*) by its finders and then repeatedly referred to as a Northern Shrike in listserves postings over several weeks. Prompted by queries from various birders uncomfortable with the prevailing opinion, Shai Mitra took a closer look and overturned the prevailing identification. His report includes an excellent description of the bird supplemented with photographs. Evidently an immature Loggerhead Shrike, the pale-based bill, moderately broad mask narrowing between eye and bill, and the fine barring on the breast (but absent on the mantle) had led some observers to the incorrect conclusion.

Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*)

2010-73-A One, Cook Hill Road, Partridge Run WMA, **Albany**, 11 Nov (Will Raup; ph Danika Raup)

We often hear of sightings of Boreal Chickadee outside of the Adirondack Mountains but reports with documentation are rarely submitted. This Boreal Chickadee was seen and photographed by Will Raup and his wife in the Partridge Run Wildlife Management Area, situated east of Albany and south of

Interstate 88. This is a heavily wooded area and, at an elevation of about 1600 ft, might be considered appropriate habitat for this species.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

2010-65-A/D One, Point Peninsula, **Jefferson**, 12-22 Dec (Michael Stewart, Jeff Bolsinger, Gerald S. Lazarczyk, Bill Purcell; ph M. Stewart, J. Bolsinger, G. Lazarczyk, B. Purcell)

Mike Stewart first spotted this Townsend's Solitaire perched on top of a tree in an eastern red cedar stand, where it maintained a territory throughout the winter and was frequently observed eating cedar berries and occasionally singing from the tree tops. Generally cooperative and confiding, the solitaire was observed by many birders and stayed well into March. A color photograph by Stewart was published in *The Kingbird* 61(2):151.

Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*)

2010-19-A One, Alley Pond Park, **Queens**, 22 May (Joseph Viglietta)

While this species provides a difficult visual identification problem with regard to separation from Hermit (*C. guttatus*) and Gray-cheeked (*C. minimus*) Thrushes, the song is distinctive to the trained ear. The observer did a good job of carefully describing the pattern of the song, which ended with an up-slurred element. The date of this sighting falls within the apparent peak date range of spring migration through the northeast. While this rare species is intensively studied during the breeding season, its migration is still relatively poorly understood; well-documented records like this are very useful to help piece together information about this enigmatic thrush.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)

2010-81-A/D One, Central Park, **New York**, 28 Nov-18 Jan 2011 (Jacob Drucker, Deborah Allen, Gerald S. Lazarczyk, Shawn Billerman; ph Lloyd Spitalnik, D. Allen)

2010-94-A One male, Pebble Beach Estates, East Marion, **Suffolk**, 28 Nov (Angus Wilson; ph A. Wilson)

Two Varied Thrushes were discovered downstate at around the same date in early winter. One found by Bill Singer was present for at least a week at a feeder in East Marion, Suffolk, to about 5 Dec, typical of many reports from the state of relatively short-staying feeder birds. More unusual was one spotted by Ray Slyper on 28 Nov in New York City's Central Park and seen regularly through the winter, with the last reported observation from 1 May 2011 (*fide* New York City Rare Bird Alert). Varied Thrush has occurred in New York approximately annually since it was added back to the NYSARC review list in 2005.

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)

2010-8-A One male, Smith Point CP, **Suffolk**, 24 Mar (Bob Grover)

Although Prothonotary Warbler is not considered a review species for NYSARC—it breeds in small numbers and is also seen as a scarce migrant—this report details an unusually early date. The Committee found no issue with the description or identification, and the date is close to another record-early sighting from 30 Mar 2005 (Mitra and Lindsay 2005).

Hermit Warbler (*Setophaga occidentalis*)

2010-84-A/C One first-year female, Sunken Meadow SP, **Suffolk**, 4-7 Dec (Shaibal S. Mitra, Jason Silverman, Angus Wilson; ph S. S. Mitra, J. Silverman, A. Wilson)

This attractive warbler was found and identified by Vinnie Pellegrino, who contacted fellow Sunken Meadow regular Norm Klein, who then called warbler authority Shai Mitra. It just so happened that Mitra and party were en route to the park and were able to quickly confirm the identification and help spread word to other birders, many of whom converged on the site that day. The warbler favored the edge of a close-cropped lawn adjacent to a line of scrubby trees that backed onto the sandy beach and Long Island Sound (see p. 148). There it fed on small insects and worm-like invertebrates, occasionally eating bittersweet fruit in the hedge line. This same spot had proven particularly attractive to migrants in the past, including a Yellow-throated Warbler (*S. dominica*) that was also found by Pellegrino. Despite the cold and windy conditions of this relatively exposed spot, the Hermit Warbler lingered in this same area to 8 Dec before disappearing. Regular updates on the listserves helped many other birders find and enjoy this important rarity.

Evaluating reports of extralimital Hermit Warblers is complicated by hybridization with Townsend's Warbler (*S. townsendi*) where the breeding ranges overlap in Oregon and Washington States. Indeed a warbler reported from the south shore of Long Island in late Nov 2002 showed a resemblance to a hatch-year male Hermit Warbler but was determined to be most likely a hybrid of these two species, a so-called HeTo Warbler (NYSARC 2002-42-A/G). Recent studies have shown that the hybridization zone is expanding, with the behaviorally dominant Townsend's Warbler pushing southwards into the range of Hermit Warbler (Krosby and Rohwer 2010). The three reports of the Dec 2010 Hermit Warbler at Sunken Meadow SP on Long Island included excellent photos and accompanying written descriptions that gave no indication of a hybrid origin. The bird was tentatively aged and sexed as a 1st-fall female, and the grayish back, virtually unmarked whitish underparts, bright yellow face with only subtly darker auriculars, prominent yellow eye-ring, and absence of yellow around the vent helped to rule out Black-throated Green (*S. virens*) and Townsend's Warblers, and furthermore gave no indication of mixed ancestry.

Hermit Warbler is considered a very good candidate for vagrancy to NYS. They are migratory, albeit shorter distance migrants than many other wood warbler species, and have occurred several times in neighboring states and provinces (Connecticut [2 records], Massachusetts [4 records], Ontario [7 records], and Nova Scotia [2 records]), although the majority of these other extralimital records are from the spring (May) rather than the fall or winter. The reports were accepted unanimously as the first record of Hermit Warbler for NYS. A brief note announcing this addition to the NYS Avian Checklist was published previously in *The Kingbird* 61(2):132. A color photograph by Vinnie Pellegrino was published in *The Kingbird* 61(2):149.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

2010-85-A One, private residence, Burt, Town of Wilson, **Niagara**, 17-24 Nov (Willie D'Anna; ph W. D'Anna)

2010-89-A One, Lake Osiris Road, Walden, **Orange**, 19 Dec (William Fiero, ph W. Fiero)

Like Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*), Lark Sparrow is sufficiently rare in Upstate NY that documentation is requested. Unlike that species, there is no increasing pattern of occurrence in the state, so having two records in late 2010 seems especially fortuitous. Betsy Potter flushed a Lark Sparrow from her feeding station in Niagara Co. when she was throwing down seed. She alerted Willie D'Anna and the general birding public, enabling over 30 birders to see this bird over the course of its eight-day stay. Due to its relatively bright head pattern, it was thought that this bird could be an adult, but ageing Lark Sparrows by this feature is only suggestive (Pyle 1997). The bird in Orange Co. was also at a feeding station and found by the homeowner/birder, William Fiero. The bird was only seen at the feeding station for two 15-minute periods during the late morning of that day. Its relatively drab plumage suggests that it was an immature. This was the first record for Orange Co.

"Sooty" Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca, unalaschcensis* subspecies group)

2010-13-A/E One, Strawberry Fields, Central Park, **New York**, 13-14 May (Stephanie Seymour, Bella Fradlis, Stephen Chang, Angus Wilson, Deborah Allen; ph Susan Opotow, David Speiser, Lloyd Spitalnik, D. Allen)

Early on the morning of 13 May Steve Chang found this Fox Sparrow in a dimly lit corner of Strawberry Fields just feet from the John Lennon Memorial (see Chang 2010 for a full account). Chang was joined a couple of minutes later by Andrew Rubenfeld, and they were able to show the bird to others, including Stephanie Seymour. It was immediately apparent to Chang and companions that this was not a "Red" Fox Sparrow but one of the western forms. Cell phone calls were made to Karen Fung, who immediately posted a note to the NYSBIRDS-L listserves with news of a "*Fox Sparrow (Western Subspecies, a much grayer form),*" and this was followed by additional postings during the day with useful discussion of the identification and unusual nature of the sighting. The bird was relocated at daybreak the next morning by Seth Ausubel and others and was seen off-and-on through the day before vanishing for good. Being peak warbler season, a number of well-equipped photographers were in the park, and some of their shots were submitted as documentation or at least included with the written submissions of others. For most of the time the bird favored the dense leaf litter of the understory, and this made for challenging photography that often necessitated the use of flash. The Committee was struck by the profound differences in the rendition of key colors (reds, browns and grays especially) between the various sets of photographs and thus relied heavily on the written descriptions of key colors and perceptions of members who had seen the bird in life. This anecdote is a powerful reminder of how important it is to keep written notes of one's observations and not rely entirely on photographs.

The occurrence of ten or twelve forms of Fox Sparrow across North America has long been known, and these divisions have been upheld by more

recent molecular and ecological studies (Zink and Kessen 1999, Zink and Weckstein 2003). The different subspecies are usually organized into four major groups, and there is a reasonable possibility that some or all of these will be elevated to full-species status in the future. Identification of the different Fox Sparrow forms is discussed in depth by Rising (1995), Rising and Beadle (1996) and Zink and Kessen (1999). With regard to the Central Park bird, the absence of rusty red on the wing coverts, upper tail coverts and tail combined with dense flank and breast spotting and uniform face pattern argued against "Red" Fox Sparrow (*iliaca* group), which is a common migrant and winter resident in the park. The bill was not solid enough for "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow (*megarhyncha* group), a bird of the Californian central valley. Although Thick-billed has a more uniform face pattern than Red Fox Sparrow, it shares rusty or chestnut tones in the flight feathers which were not evident on the Central Park bird. This leaves "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow (*schistacea* group) and "Sooty" Fox Sparrow (*unalaschcensis* group) as the closest contenders. Although Slate-colored shares some of the gray tones especially on the neck, shoulder and mantle, most have a pale supra-loral spot that was not evident. Some observers and commentators commented on the lack of yellow tones to the base of the lower mandible, supposedly a contra-indicator of "Sooty" Fox Sparrow. However, research suggests this is a variable feature with little value as an identification tool. Overall, the Committee agreed that the balance of features were indicative of "Sooty" Fox Sparrow (*unalaschcensis* group). Further subdivision is extremely difficult, with only slender and poorly understood differences between *fuliginosa* (breeds in coastal British Columbia), *unalaschcensis* (breeds in SW Alaska and the Aleutian chain) and several additional populations sandwiched in between (*insularis*, *sinuosa*, *annectens* and *townsendi*).

The occurrence of any non-Red Fox Sparrow in eastern North America is of considerable significance. With regard to NYS, there is only one prior well-documented example, an *altivagans* "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow that was mist-netted and collected on 12 May 1971 on Fire Island, Suffolk Co., by Paul A. Buckley (Buckley 1974). The specimen was deposited at the National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C. (specimen #566277) and was separated from *schistacea* by measurements (wing cord 82.5 mm, tail 74 mm, exposed culmen 11.2 mm, bill from nostril 8.5 mm, tarsus 24.1 mm, hind toe and claw 7.8 mm) and the more brownish cast to the dorsal feathering. Intriguingly, in the *Kingbird* Region 7 report for the spring of 2005 (KB 55(3):301), editor Mike Peterson referred to a Fox Sparrow that visited Joan Kogut's Vermontville feeder in Franklin Co. on 7 May that was believed to be a "'*Sooty' Fox Sparrow. The description is consistent with the unalaschcensis group: a large, dark gray blackish brown sparrow with breast very heavily streaked, almost blotchy, otherwise similar in size and behavior to our usual 'Red' Fox Sparrow.*" Unfortunately no report was submitted to NYSARC, and it is not known whether this interesting bird was photographed. NYSARC also reviewed a possible "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow from Hamlin Beach SP, Monroe, seen on 7 Dec 2003 (NYSARC 2003-74-A). Again this bird was not photographed and

after careful review the Committee voted not to accept the record, citing details of the description that did not seem to match any individual subspecies of Fox Sparrow. This uncertainty leaves open the possibility of a hybrid combination or color aberration. If nothing else, these last two examples underscore the importance of photographing and carefully describing any unusual Fox Sparrow in NYS. This holds true for members of several other polytypic species for which the field identification criteria are still evolving, such as members of the solitary-vireo group or the juncos. It is interesting to note that the Central Park, Fire Island, and Vermontville reports occurred within the same seven-day period (7-14 May), at which time wintering "Red" Fox Sparrows are mostly absent.

In conclusion, the Committee voted unanimously to accept this as a "Sooty" Fox Sparrow (*unalaschcensis* group), which hails from the Pacific Northwest (British Columbia to western Alaska). Most or all members of the *unalaschcensis* group appear to be migratory, moving southwards into southern British Columbia and down the Pacific coast to the US/Mexico border during the winter months (Garrett et al. 2000). This is the first record for NYS and one of only a handful east of the Mississippi River. A color photograph of the Central Park bird by Lloyd Spitalnik was published in *The Kingbird* 61(3):242 and *North American Birds* 64(3):533.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia guerula*)

2010-88-A One, Lake Road, Dryden, **Tompkins**, 7 Dec (Shawn Billerman, ph Andy Johnson)

Many of the Harris's Sparrows seen in NYS are discovered during the winter at feeders. Shawn Billerman and four other birders saw and photographed this individual at a private feeder on 7 Dec, where it remained into Jan 2011.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

2010-28-A One male, Wilson-Tuscarora SP, Wilson, **Niagara**, 22 May (Willie D'Anna; ph Chris Newton)

2010-72-A/B One female, private residence, McGraw, **Cortland**, 8-21 Nov (Shawn Billerman, William Toner; ph S. Billerman, W. Toner)

Summer Tanager is a review species for Upstate NY only, and in the last 11 years NYSARC has accepted 12 records. Like many birds of more southern affinity, this species appears to be shifting its range northward, resulting in an accelerating number of sightings statewide. The first-year male at Wilson-Tuscarora SP was found by Willie D'Anna and Betsy Potter and then photographed by Chris Newton later that same day. The female (or immature male) in Cortland Co. was discovered by the homeowner and birder, William Toner, and stayed for two weeks, allowing several other birders to see it. The late date of this individual is intriguing and might suggest a migrant from the southwest rather than a bird from the population to our immediate south.

Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)

2010-90-A One male, Salt Point, **Dutchess**, 17 May (Robert Bowler)

This adult male Blue Grosbeak appeared in the homeowner's yard, where some cracked corn and sunflower seeds had been thrown down to attract Wild

Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*). It was spotted by Robert Bowler's wife, Alys Bowler. Both of these long-time birders were able to study and easily identify this bird. Although Indigo Buntings (*Passerina cyanea*) are sometimes misidentified as this species, the rusty wingbars and nearly Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) size that were described clearly ruled out that species. Blue Grosbeak is on the review list for Upstate only—this record marks the 16th accepted since 1991 and the fifth from Dutchess Co.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

2010-11-A One female, Sea Cliff, Long Island, **Nassau**, 2 May (Roseann Blackburn)

Roseann Blackburn was sitting in her yard, hoping to spot warblers or to photograph the recently returned Baltimore Orioles (*Icterus galbula*), when she noticed an unfamiliar bird. After studying it and taking photos, Blackburn identified it as a Painted Bunting, which was confirmed from the photographs by staff at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The description and photos provided in the report clearly establish the identification.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

2010-44-A One female, Van Dyne Spoor Road, Montezuma Wetlands Complex, **Wayne**, 16 Jul (Christopher L. Wood)

2010-71-A/B One male, Howland's Island, Montezuma WMA, **Cayuga**, 11 Sept (Bill Purcell, Kevin McGann)

2010-86-A One female, Old French Road, Mendon, **Monroe**, 2, 5-6, 8 Dec (Jeanne Skelly, Brad Carlson, ph B. Carlson)

Three Yellow-headed Blackbird reports were accepted this year. Two came from the Montezuma area, a female in mid-Jul and a male in mid-Sep. Both of these were seen in association with the extensive blackbird roosts that occur in that area, the former as it went to roost in the evening and the latter as it departed the roost in the morning. As often occurs with blackbird roosts, both observations were brief, and no photographs were obtained, but the Committee received good written descriptions in each case that supported the identifications. Remarkably, Brad Carlson's feeders in Honeoye Falls, Monroe Co., hosted a Yellow-headed Blackbird for the second time in the past three winters—this one a female that was present for about a week and clearly different from the immature male that also stayed for a week in Jan 2009 (NYSARC 2009-2-A).

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

2010-74-A One female, Deep Hollow, Montauk, **Suffolk**, 31 Oct (Angus Wilson; ph A. Wilson)

Angus Wilson found this female Brewer's Blackbird on 31 Oct at the small cattle ranch in Deep Hollow situated at the eastern tip of Long Island's South Fork. He was able to take photographs as it perched on the fencing of a cattle pen before flying some distance away. It was not relocated on subsequent days. The description and photographs rule out Rusty Blackbird (*E. carolinus*) and other potential confusion species. Although Brewer's Blackbird is reported on an annual basis, especially in western and central NYS, very few are

appropriately documented with photographs. This is strongly encouraged because of the difficulties in identification posed by transitional or immature plumages of Rusty Blackbird. Brewer's is especially rare in coastal NYS.

2010 Reports Accepted but Origins Considered Unknown or Unnatural

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)

2010-49-A One, Montezuma NWR, May's Point, **Seneca,** 11 Aug (William W. Watson)

The description of the bill and facial characteristics left little doubt that this was a Trumpeter Swan. This species is now found routinely in Upstate NY, and, although not submitted for review, there were credible reports of as many as twenty from Montezuma NWR in the fall of 2010. Each year, NYSARC considers the status of this species, focusing on whether the population, which is derived from introduction programs in Ontario and elsewhere, can be considered self-sustaining. Information on how the Midwestern and Eastern populations are growing and to what degree they still benefit from human help, primarily feeding, is being gathered and will be valuable to the ongoing deliberations. Given the apparent success of the introduction programs, the extent of human assistance has decreased in the past few years. Continued documentation of marked Trumpeter Swans or birds from coastal NYS is encouraged.

European Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

2010-59-A One male, private residence, Burt, Town of Wilson, **Niagara**, 7 Jul (Willie D'Anna; ph W. D'Anna)

After returning home from work on the afternoon of 7 Jul, Willie D'Anna was surprised to see a bird at the feeding station that he did not immediately recognize. He alerted Betsy Potter, who found a good approximation of the bird in Lars Jonsson's *Birds of Europe*—a European Greenfinch (Jonsson 1999). It was seen a few more times that day but never thereafter. Over the last several years there have been a number of sightings of European finches in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, and these are generally considered products of a major release of birds by a dealer in Chicago. Although this Greenfinch sighting was long after that release, it is not inconceivable that some have survived and are wandering around the Great Lakes. This stocky finch is not considered a long-distance migrant and has no history of vagrancy to North America. Although the identification was not in question, for the reasons discussed above, a wild origin for the New York bird was considered uncertain.

2010 Report Accepted as Supplemental

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*)

2010-45-A One female, private residence, Burt, Town of Wilson, **Niagara**, 18 May (Betsy Potter; sketch B. Potter)

Following five days of strong warbler migration along the Lake Ontario shore, Betsy Potter was out early and trailing the song of a Magnolia Warbler (*S.*

magnolia) through a brushy area near her home when she spotted a second bird in a loose tangle of grapevine. It was quite a bit larger than the Magnolia and was moving relatively slowly for a warbler, hopping from branch to branch, feeding as it went. Although the sky was heavily overcast, she noted its bright lemon yellow throat that continued as a lighter wash down to the belly and some faint streaking on the chest. In full view and only about nine feet off the ground, its identity was not immediately obvious despite her years of experience with the migrant warblers of the region. A side view showed that the head and back were blue-gray with some black streaking on the back and that the undertail coverts were white. The bird bobbed its tail repeatedly, and by this point Potter had become convinced this bird was in fact a Kirtland's Warbler!

Potter usually carries her camera on these walks but regrettably had not done so on this occasion. Realizing the profound significance of her discovery, she wisely spent several seconds taking a mental picture of the bird before rushing the short distance home. Returning minutes later with camera in hand, the bird had vanished and could not be relocated despite searching for several hours. Before reviewing field guides or other materials, Potter prepared a colored sketch that was included in the report and is consistent with the written description (see p. 148). Although this was a relatively brief sighting, the Committee found the details especially convincing. Positive points for the identification are the detailed description of the plumage, the large size compared to Magnolia Warbler and the constant tail-bobbing behavior. Other "tail-bobbers" like Prairie Warbler (*S. discolor*) and Palm Warbler (*S. palmarum*) are adequately ruled out by these details.

Kirtland's Warbler seems overdue for addition to the New York State Avian Checklist. This relatively rare species breeds primarily in extensive stands of jack pine re-growth forest in the Au Sable River drainage of Lower Michigan and winters throughout the Bahama archipelago (Mayfield 1992). Due to habitat management efforts in Michigan, the population has increased slowly since the first surveys in 1951. A 2008 census found 1,697 singing males, and today the total population is estimated at over 3,500 birds. Assuming that northbound migrants follow a reasonably straight route from the Bahamas to Michigan, a small deflection might be sufficient to bring a few birds into western NY, where they would come up against the Lake Erie and Lake Ontario shores. In support of this idea, the species is now annual in May (exclusively) at Point Pelee, Ontario, some 210 miles southwest of the Town of Wilson, NY. Of particular relevance is the fact that spring of 2010 was one of the best for sightings of Kirtland's Warbler at Point Pelee, with birds recorded on 7 May, 14 May and 22-23 May along with another at Long Point, Ontario (only 80 miles SW of Wilson, NY) on 29 May. Between 2005 and 2009 there were at least eight other records from the Point Pelee area, all between 9-25 May. Thus the NYS sighting fits neatly within this surprisingly narrow migration window.

Interestingly, a summary of bird records from the Rochester area includes five sightings of Kirtland's Warbler, with three from the spring: 18 May 1918, 9 May 1942, and 26-30 May 1943 (Taylor 1985). For reasons unknown, none of these sightings were mentioned in the major regional summaries prepared by

Beardslee and Mitchell (1965) and Bull (1976). Although we generally think of Kirtland's Warbler as a species confined to Michigan during the breeding season, its nesting range could have been more extensive in relatively recent times. For example in 1945, nesting was confirmed in Petawawa, Ontario, located about 250 miles north of Rochester, NY (Chamberlain and McKeating 1978; Dunn and Garrett 1997). More recently, Kirtland's Warbler has begun to expand away from its core range: from 1995 onwards nesting has occurred in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and since 2007 the species has nested in Wisconsin and again on the Canadian Forces Base in Petawawa, Ontario (Eskelsen, 2007, Probst et al. 2003).

Combining the convincing description provided in this report with the steady increase in the population and concomitant increase in credible sightings of migrants in and around the Great Lakes, plus the historical precedence for nesting north of Lake Ontario, the Committee felt this single observer sighting made for a particularly compelling case. Unfortunately, the NYSARC by-laws require physical documentation (photographs, recordings, etc.) for single observer sightings of a species that would be new to the NYS Avian Checklist, and the Committee agreed that this high standard of evidence should be maintained. Instead, this record is placed in a new 'Supplemental' category that is intended to reflect the strength and importance of this report. With luck, Potter and/or some other diligent warbler watchers will be fortunate enough to see and hopefully photograph another Kirtland's Warbler within NYS in the near future.

2009 Reports Accepted

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)

2009-88-C One adult winter plumage, Bensonhurst Park Brooklyn, **Kings**, 16 Jan 2010 (Alan Wells; ph A. Wells)

The Committee received an additional report, with photographs, of the Mew (Common) Gull, *L. c. canus*, present in Brooklyn during the winter of 2009-2010 (NYSARC 2009-88-A/B).

Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*)

2009-94-A One third basic, Niagara River at Goat Island, **Niagara**, 20, 21 Dec (James Pawlicki; ph J. Pawlicki)

This third-basic Thayer's Gull was nicely described and photographed by the discoverer, Jim Pawlicki. The identification of this species is challenging, however, the photographs were sufficient to easily rule out American Herring Gull (*L. argentatus smithsonianus*) based on the size, structure, wingtip pattern, and brighter pink legs in direct comparison. Although the report does not explicitly discuss Kumlein's Iceland Gull (L. *glaucoides kumlieni*), the larger structure and the wingtip pattern (well shown in one photo) are fully consistent with Thayer's Gull.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)
2009-93-A One immature male, W. Muck Road, Elba, **Genesee** 9-10 Aug (James Pawlicki; sketch J. Pawlicki)
While studying shorebirds on a flooded turf farm, Jim Pawlicki noticed this bird among a large flock of blackbirds and European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). It showed a bronzy orange head, which made it stand out, but it did not cooperate for lengthy viewing. Jim's confidence in the identification was shaken slightly when he found out that a pale-headed male Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) had been reported at this spot on the previous day. He returned the following day, re-found the bird, and was able to see a small amount of white on the upperwing coverts and presence of dark lores. Moreover, the bird was roughly equal in size to the accompanying Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). These features ruled out an aberrant cowbird and served to confirm his initial identification as a first-summer Yellow-headed Blackbird.

2008 Reports Accepted

Western Sandpiper (*Caldris mauri*)
2008-104-A, One, Ontario Beach, Rochester, **Monroe**, 20 Sept (Christopher L. Wood; ph C. L. Wood)
This Western Sandpiper was found by Dominic Sherony on 18 Sep and stayed at least two additional days, when Chris Wood was able to photograph it. Although not a review species in coastal NYS, this species was until recently on the review list for Upstate based on the paucity of documented sightings. Although rare, the Committee now considers the species to be annual in Upstate NY and no longer requests documentation of fall sightings. Spring sightings, however, should still be fully documented and submitted. The Rochester bird is notable because it was an adult in full basic plumage. Most sightings away from the coast have involved juveniles or adults transitioning into basic plumage.

Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)
2008-93-B Two, **Pelagic** (from 10-25 miles SW of Jones Inlet, **Nassau**), 3 Feb (Paul A. Guris)
This report supplements a previously accepted record (NYSARC 2008-93-A), providing specific coordinates of the sighting, confirming that these sightings occurred within NYS waters.

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*)
2008-97-B One, Bacardi wreck [39° 52.680' N, -72° 39.046' W.], **Pelagic**, 3 Feb (Paul A. Guris)
As above, this supplementary report establishes the location of an accepted record (NYSARC 2008-97-A) seen during an organized See Life Paulagics offshore excursion that sailed from Freeport, Nassau Co. on the Capt. Lou VII.

2007 Reports Accepted

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)
2007-83-A One, Shinnecock Inlet, **Suffolk**, 25 Feb (Shaibal S. Mitra; ph S. S. Mitra)
Steve Biasetti, Sue Benson and Jim Benson found this adult murre at the mouth of the Shinnecock Inlet, where it remained until 27 Feb. Shai Mitra's report includes a digiscoped photograph showing the distinctive bill with its white tomium streak and wholly dark head except for a triangular area of white on the throat.

2004 Reports Accepted

Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris)*
2004-91-A One, found dead, James Baird SP, LaGrange, **Dutchess**, 30 Aug (Stan DeOrsey, ph Kevin McGowan)
The Committee received this report of a large rail found dead by Jude Holdsworth at James Baird SP in Dutchess Co. on 30 Aug 2004. The description and accompanying photographs depict a large, grayish-brown rail. The grayish-brown and overall muted colors indicate Clapper Rail rather than King Rail (*R. elegans*) or the smaller Virginia Rail (*R. limicola*). The measurements provided also fit Clapper Rail. The specimen was deposited in the collection at Cornell University, where it was photographed by Kevin McGowan. Clapper Rails are extremely rare away from salt water, and this is the first inland record reviewed by NYSARC. *Bull's Birds of New York State* (Bull 1976) lists only an old record from along the Hudson River in Ossining, Westchester Co., which is still tidal, and remarks that a reported record from central NY is "apparently in error."

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*)
2004-92-A/B One male, Forest Park, **Queens**, 7 May (Eric Miller, Andy Guthrie; ph A. Guthrie)
Eric Miller found this male MacGillivray's Warbler in Forest Park on the afternoon of 7 May 2004 as it foraged in the woodland understory. A handful of other birders viewed the warbler through the course of the afternoon, but it was not seen subsequently. Two factors complicate the field identification of vagrant MacGillivray's Warblers: the fact that some male Mourning Warblers (G. *philadelphia*) can show extensive white eye-arcs and the existence of a narrow zone of overlap in western Canada where these two species regularly hybridize. Based on a broad suite of pro-MacGillivray's features evident in the descriptions and photographs, the Committee felt that this bird was fully consistent with a MacGillivray's and showed no evidence of mixed ancestry. This is the third accepted record of MacGillivray's Warbler in NYS, following a subadult male observed and photographed in Dec 1999 at the Mohlenoff Nursery, Richmond Co. (NYSARC 1999-52-A/B), and a male banded in Jun 2003 at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, Monroe Co. (NYSARC 2003-24-A).

1987 Report Accepted

Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*)
1987-50-A One, banded, Richard A. Noyes Sanctuary, New Haven, **Oswego**, 11 April (Steven F. Kahl)
This Boreal Owl was captured at an owl banding station on the south shore of Lake Ontario and the identification established with an in-hand description with detailed measurements (Slack 1987). Boreal Owls have been found to be rare spring migrants along Lake Ontario. This is the 15th record accepted by NYSARC since 1978; of these, about half are from early spring from Erie to Oswego Cos.

1962 Report Accepted

Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*)
1962-3-A One male, Catherine and Jacob Streets, Yorktown, **Westchester**, 22 Dec (Robert Gochfeld)
This record was reviewed because of the rarity of this species away from appropriate boreal forest habitat. Many participants on the Peekskill Christmas Bird Count were able to see this unusual find. This sighting was accepted by Bull (1976).

1960 Reports Accepted

Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*)
1960-1-A One adult, 2 miles off Jones Beach, **Nassau**, 29 May (Robert Gochfeld)
The surprise discovery of an adult Yellow-nosed Albatross within sight of Jones Beach during a pelagic excursion out of Freeport, Nassau Co., organized by the Linnaean Society of New York, is the stuff of local birding legend. This constituted the first record for NYS and, at the time, only the fourth documented record for North America. Some 40-60 participants saw, photographed and even took movies of the bird from two vessels (*Dutchess II* and *Jolly*), and the identification was confirmed from the subsequent images by renowned seabird authority Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy. Several accounts have been published previously (Bull, 1961, Post 1968, Fisher 1993). A black-and-white photograph by Joseph R. Jehl of the albatross taking wing was published in Bull 1976. Another photograph of it resting on the water taken by J. Daniel Buckley was published in Bull 1961.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)
1960-2-A One adult, 6-8 miles south of Jones inlet, **Pelagic**, 29 May (Robert Gochfeld)
This light-phase adult Long-tailed Jaeger, complete with long tail streamers, flew past the *Dutchess II* during the historic 'albatross trip' described above.

2010 Reports Not Accepted

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*)
2010-52-A One, Dunkirk Harbor, Dunkirk, **Erie,** 9 Mar
This bird was observed in the water near the Dunkirk Harbor pier, a hotspot for birds and birders in western NY. The observer then watched it lift up and fly out past the outer breakwall, circle back briefly, and then depart. The report mentions that the large yellow bill was flat on top with a lower mandible that curved upward. While this is a fair description of the bill of a Yellow-billed Loon, the report offered few additional details, and some Committee members felt that even some non-loon species were not ruled out by it. Yellow-billed Loon is extremely rare in all of Eastern North America, and there are only three accepted reports of this species in NYS. Given the heavy significance of any additional sighting, the Committee felt that a complete description, preferably with photographs, is required.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)
2010-79-A One, coastal Lindenhurst, **Suffolk**, 25 Nov
This bird was seen circling with gulls and, although suggestive of a pelican, was only described in the very briefest of terms, thus not permitting a conclusive positive decision.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)
2010-80-A One, Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, **Westchester**, 6 Jun
Several birders saw this hawk fly overhead at the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation in Westchester Co., but unfortunately only one report was received. Given the very short observation time and difficult conditions, the description was understandably brief. Although the Committee felt that the description was generally consistent with Mississippi Kite, other possibilities could not be completely ruled out by the description provided, and hence the report could not be accepted.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
2010-62-A One, Saratoga Springs, **Saratoga**, 23 Oct
2010-70-A One, Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch, **Delaware**, 27 Oct
Especially in the northeast, where this species is quite unusual, positive identification requires careful and detailed scrutiny, something not always possible with a hawk flying off into the distance. The description of the Saratoga bird left the Committee thinking that perhaps a female Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) was involved, whereas the field marks noted on the Franklin Mt. bird were not really sufficient to rule out other migrating raptors.

Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*)
2010-18-A One, John Boyd Thacher Park, near Albany, **Albany**, 21 May
The observer obtained detailed photographs of an unfamiliar hawk soaring with some Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) and, after comparing these to images on

the Internet, concluded that the bird was most likely a Zone-tailed Hawk, a species unrecorded in NYS. Three photographs were provided together with a very brief description. On reviewing the images, the Committee concluded that this was in fact an adult Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*). The photos show a relatively small *buteo*, with pointed rather than straight wings that are held flat rather than in the characteristic dihedral. The lighting makes the bird look extremely dark and suggested a dark-morph Broad-winged to some members. Further cementing the revised identification, the photos show that the broad barring on the upper surface of the tail was white, rather than gray.

Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*)
2010-39-A One, 67.3 nm SSE of Shinnecock Inlet [39°51'45.71"N, -71°45'32.00"W], **Pelagic**, 7 Aug
The observer was fishing in 79.2°F water with a depth of 900 feet alongside two non-birding family members. Conditions were less than optimal for a small vessel, with a 15-20 knot easterly breeze and swells of 4-7 feet. Suddenly a dark bird approached the stern, coming within 40 yards as determined by the fixed spread of the fishing gear. It was flying some 10-15 feet above the water, circled once and then disappeared among the disorganized waves, possibly landing. There was not enough time for the observer to retrieve his camera before the bird vanished and, sadly, it could not be re-found. It was described as being uniformly dark chocolate brown and even-toned throughout, with a dark, not unduly thin, bill. Significantly, the forehead was described as having a small whitish patch that gave way to finer speckles. The plumage appeared uniform in color, lacking any feather fringing, and the tail appeared to have a shallow rather than deep fork. The flight was described as light and buoyant. The small size and absence of white flashes in the primaries seemed inconsistent with a dark jaeger (*Stercorarius sp.*) or a juvenile Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus),* which would show obvious white tips to the scapulars and mantle feathers, as well as white on the underwing coverts and vent. The observer concluded that this was most likely an immature Brown Noddy, a species familiar to him from recent trips to islands in the Caribbean Sea. The NYSARC Guidelines stipulate that a species cannot be added to the NYS Avian Checklist based on a single observer sighting without documentary evidence such as a photograph, and the Committee fully supports this procedure. However, as discussed in the introduction to this Annual Report, the Committee wishes to recognize compelling sightings that stumble at this last hurdle. Both this Noddy report and an earlier report that was actively solicited by the Committee (NYSARC 1977-1-A, see below) seemed good candidates for this new Supplemental category. Unfortunately after extensive discussion and three rounds of voting, the Committee concluded that although this may have been a Brown Noddy, there were sufficient uncertainties to prevent acceptance.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)
2010-57-A/B One, Weesuck Creek, East Quogue, **Suffolk**, 19 Sep

Two observers provided detailed and independent descriptions of this small vireo seen over the course of several hours in East Quogue but unfortunately not photographed. With only a handful of records in the Northeast, this inconspicuous vireo can present a significant identification challenge due to similarities with other vireos. Aspects of the descriptions were consistent with Bell's Vireo, but the two reports differed on some key features, leaving the Committee uncertain about the identification. In particular, the Committee felt that immature White-eyed Vireo (*V. griseus*) could not be completely ruled out based on the totality of the information available for review.

Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*)
2010-25-A One, Tivoli Bays, Tivoli, **Dutchess**, 11 Jun
This report describes a three-minute encounter with an unfamiliar bird by a relatively inexperienced birder who was actively consulting his field guide when the bird vanished. Magpies are relatively distinctive birds, and some aspects of the brief description were consistent with Black-billed Magpie or the very similar Eurasian Magpie (*Pica pica*). However, several important details, including the presence of white scapulars and extensive white tongues in the primaries, were not noted. The size was not described in relation to any other species, and the bird's behavior seemed atypical for a magpie.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)
2010-91-A/B One, West End, Jones Beach SP, **Nassau**, 5 Dec
This sighting involved a blackbird sitting atop a tree in one of the West End groves, viewed briefly before it flew away to the north. Described as having a "yellow head," indicating an apparent adult male, but also with "white and very black stripes on the breast" that should not be present in such a plumage, this record left the Committee wondering whether perhaps another icterid might actually have been involved here. Unfortunately, a companion birder who may have been able to add some insight to the sighting was on the inside of the grove and only emerged to see a disappearing blackbird.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)
2010-10-A Three females, private residence, Glasco, **Ulster,** 23-26 Mar
2010-76-A One male, Mountaindale, **Sullivan**, 10 Nov
Unfortunately none of these four birds were documented with photographs, and the Sullivan Co. bird was taken by a Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*). In both cases the brief descriptions were more suggestive of other species, such as Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) in the first instance and Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) in the second.

1977 Report Not Accepted

Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*)
1977-1-A One, seen at sea from parking lot 2, Robert Moses SP, Fire Island, **Suffolk**, 8 Nov

The Committee wrestled long and hard with this report from an experienced birder, which took the form of a note published in *The Kingbird*. The report was solicited by the Committee in the context of the 2010 Noddy report discussed above (NYSARC 2010-39-A). The observer of the 1977 sighting was seawatching after the passage of a northeaster that brought gale force winds and heavy rains to the region. His companion had just left for work when he spotted a dark bird passing some 200 yards offshore. It flew low over the extremely rough water, beating laboriously into the wind and appeared to be entirely dark brown except for a prominent white cap. The tail appeared long and pointed, comparable to that of a Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*). After giving an unobstructed view for five to ten seconds, the bird disappeared into a wave trough and could not be relocated. The observer was already familiar with Brown Noddy from Tobago, where the species nests. After the sighting he carefully studied specimens of both Brown Noddy and Black Noddy (*A. minutus*) at the American Museum of Natural History and provided a clear rationale for eliminating the latter. After much discussion and three rounds of voting, the Committee reached a consensus that this was likely a Noddy but that the documentation was insufficient for a first state record. It was agreed that the weather conditions leading up to the observation were favorable for a southern pelagic rarity, and that the observer had taken careful, detailed notes. Lingering concerns as to whether Black Noddy could be firmly ruled out under these difficult and very brief viewing conditions precluded addition of Brown Noddy to Supplemental list.

No Decision Rendered

Merlin (*Falcon columbarius suckleyi*)

2009-92-A, One, Aurora, **Cayuga**, 2 Nov (Thomas B. Johnson; ph T. B. Johnson)

This report involved three excellent color photographs of a flying bird that is clearly a dark Merlin. The brief discussion was supplemented by evaluative comments from several noted raptor experts. "Taiga" Merlin (*F. c. columbarius*) is the typical subspecies encountered in NYS, and it is somewhat variable in overall coloration. "Black" Merlin (*F. c. suckleyi*) is the darkest subspecies of Merlin and is not recognized as having ever occurred in the northeast before. After much discussion, the Committee chose to postpone voting on this record due to insufficient clear criteria for separating "Black" Merlin from darker variants of "Taiga" Merlin and, to a lesser extent, the apparent absence of prior vagrancy to the east. The essentially unmarked flight feathers were a particularly compelling feature of this most attractive bird. Pale markings on the remiges are a consistent feature of "Taiga" Merlin and largely absent on "Black" Merlin, but it is unclear if this feature alone is reliable. Before acting decisively on this potentially very exciting record, the Committee intends to do more research and examine specimens of different Merlin taxa.

CONTRIBUTORS

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NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

GRACE'S WARBLER ON LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK: A FIRST FOR THE EAST COAST OF NORTH AMERICA

On January 1, 2012 I participated in the Point Lookout section of the Southern Nassau County Christmas Bird Count. My party consisted of Seth Ausubel, Andrew Baksh, and for a brief time Pat Aitken. At about 10:00 AM we pulled into the Town of Hempstead Beach parking lot (directly opposite the southern terminus of Loop Parkway) to bird the edges of the lot, and the pines and rock pile to the north of the lot. The times below are taken from time stamps from my photos, as I was not so concerned about the time while this was going on.

After brief discussion on a division of labor, Seth and Pat went down to work the south edges of the lot and the dunes there, and Andrew and I would work the pines and rock pile heading west, and our groups would meet at the eastern edge of the parking lot. I gave Seth one of my two-way radios, and kept the other on me. Andrew and I walked up to the pines next to where the big "Exit" sign is along the entrance/exit road on the north side of the parking lot. I asked him if he wanted the over or the under on seven individual non-introduced passerines on our walk. He took the under, and I agreed, since it had been a very slow morning for passerines (and most birds in general) so far. After pishing for a minute or two at the edge of the pines, we stopped pishing and were about to see if we could penetrate the pine stand to look for owls. Andrew was already moving towards the pines looking for a way in when I saw a small (smaller than a sparrow) passerine in the pines, which I assumed would be a warbler. I told Andrew to "Stop," although he apparently didn't need telling as he got on the bird almost immediately as well. The bird of course, was doing a reasonably good job hiding in the shade of pine needle clusters. This was 10:10 AM.

My first view of it through binoculars was of a warbler in the shade, showing bold white wing-bars (covert tips). For the first second or so I could see no color and it was facing away and the head was obscured by a branch. The first thought that jumped to my head was that it was likely one of the more expected winter warblers to be found in a pine grove, a Pine Warbler, but it immediately moved into the sun a little, and I was able to see the GRAY base color of the back and wings, and I very briefly considered Yellow-throated Warbler. When it turned slightly and showed restricted yellow on the throat and the thick yellow supra-loral area, I said something along the lines of "Uuuuuhhhh, is this a Graaace's Warbler…?" Andrew, being rightly skeptical, asked, "Why isn't it a Pine Warbler?" I mentioned the gray back and lack of spectacles with the large amount of yellow above the eye, and the small bill, and that it looked like it was a Grace's Warbler. While this conversation was going on I was already faking photos like mad, although the bird was still obscured. I started pishing some more and it seemed to respond, as it came closer and popped up into the sun for brief periods. This whole time I was just taking lots

of photos of the bird. The only time I looked at them was to briefly make sure that the settings were right. Luckily Andrew was still on the bird at this point, so I could go right back to taking photos. It then disappeared into the impenetrable pine fortress. We were still in disbelief that a **Grace's Warbler** could be here, and I mentioned that maybe there was some range of variation of some Pine Warbler plumage that I'd never seen that had a grayish back and washed out/not noticeable spectacles, although I couldn't figure out what age/sex combo that would be. In any event, it clearly wasn't a Yellow-throated Warbler given the lack of black on the throat, flanks, and the face. The bill size and thinness was also bothersome, because this would rule out both Pine and Yellow-throated. I had had extensive experience with Grace's Warblers in the mountains of southeast Arizona in April and May, and a small bill was certainly a characteristic of that species. Hmmm.

I radioed Seth that we had a "Possible Pine Warbler, unless it was a Grace's Warbler." He responded back, "Possible Pine Warbler, what is that, a new subspecies?" I told him I would let him know of any further developments.

Andrew and I, after briefly hemming and hawing over going back to the car to double check Pine Warbler variation in a field guide, decided that we would keep birding since there was clearly some activity, and that this bird obviously wasn't going anywhere, and would be there when we came back. As we worked a little to the east in what was quickly becoming clear was an area essentially devoid of birds, I mulled the idea of a Grace's Warbler over in my mind, and I became a little more comfortable with that initially unexpected possibility. It had certainly NOT previously been on my radar, and I couldn't remember any specific records on the east coast, and I couldn't remember considering it for my list of the "Next 10 species to show up in NYS." I stopped and looked back at the last photos I had taken, and as soon as the first photo popped onto the screen, just one single thought popped into my mind: "That's a Grace's Warbler." I told Andrew we needed to go back to the car (~100 yards away) immediately to double-check Pine Warbler variation in the Sibley. Mine was locked in Seth's car, so when we got to the car Andrew gave me his Eastern Sibley guide. I immediately ruled out the possibility of the bird being a Pine Warbler, and I wanted to show Andrew a picture of a Grace's to convince him, and just triple check to make sure that I wasn't crazy. (This was around 10:26 AM.) Of course it wasn't in that field guide, so we resorted to his *National Geographic* guide. While we got to that page, I giddily said something like: "Dude, it's a Grace's Warbler!"

We still needed to make sure I wasn't completely crazy and/or missing something, and to get other observers on the bird. I radioed Seth, and the conversation went like this:

Doug: "*Seth, do you copy? It's a Grace's Warbler, not a Pine.*"

Seth: "*What? [long pause] "Wait, you were serious about Grace's*?!?!?"

Doug: "*Yes, definitely. You gonna head over here*?"

Seth (in classic sarcastic New Yorker fashion, and probably my favorite line of the day): "*Oh I dunno, lemme THINK about it.*"...[let the sarcasm sink in]..."*Yeah, I'll be right over.*"

We returned to the pine grove and were joined quickly by Seth and Pat. Andrew showed Seth a photo of it as Seth got to us, and the words that came out of Seth's mouth were quite excited and colorful—and not printable here.

We had at that point informed Shai Mitra, nearby in the Baldwin territory of the CBC. I told Shai we had a potential first east coast record, from the Southwest, for which we had initially considered Pine Warbler. He guessed correctly, if incredulously, "Grace's Warbler?!?" and awaited a photo on his phone. As we spread the word, we pished for a bit and nothing happened. Shai called me back as we were starting to use playback. He said "It looks like a Grace's Warbler!" and I said, "Yeah it's actually responding to tape right now." Shai's reply to this was also excited and colorful.

We played the Grace's Warbler song, and the bird came right out to the outside of the pine grove. The bird on the recording sang maybe five or so times before we stopped playback. We were then able to track it as it foraged partially in the open for a few minutes, and we posted the news online and contacted everyone we could think of.

Rich Kelly (who has been working this area of the CBC for 30 years or so) and Doug Futuyma, the other party in our area, showed up very shortly thereafter, but the bird wasn't showing at that time and we had decided against further using tape for the time being. Right on their heels were Shai Mitra and Pat Lindsay, defecting from their nearby CBC area of Baldwin. As Shai came up to us, I made a gesture to show him a photo on my camera. He adamantly refused, "I DON'T WANNA SEE IT, DON'T SHOW IT TO ME!" (This was, among other things, an indication of his confidence in the identification, as he is deeply averse to savoring images of rare birds he intends to try to see.)

Soon after, cars began to pour in carrying birders from all over the count circle, as the Southern Nassau CBC temporarily disintegrated, or rather was condensed down to just the Town of Hempstead Beach Park parking lot. We were planning to use tape again once the entire first wave of responders arrived, but luckily the bird was soon re-found without tape, by the sharp eye of Barbara McBrien. The bird then remained mostly cooperative until about 2 PM, although it wasn't coming in as close as earlier, and everybody who arrived within the first couple of hours eventually saw it well. The south(ish) wind picked up rapidly through the day, and those who arrived after 2 PM did not get to see the bird that afternoon.

Description

Obviously a medium-sized warbler, with a small, dainty, dark-colored bill. In life the base color of the back and wings looked decidedly gray to me, although later excellent photos by Lloyd Spitalnik, David Speiser, and Steve Walter showed it to be tinged with brown, mostly on the back and nape. It showed two distinct bold white wing bars. Its underparts were white, although it had some noticeable but sparse brown/black flank streaking. The throat was solidly yellow from the bill down to the top of the upper breast. It had a thick and obvious yellow supraloral stripe, and it appeared yellow all the way from the bill to above the eye, which showed no obvious spectacles or eye ring. The small

section of the supraloral posterior to the eye was white and there was a bit of white just below the eye in a short crescent. The combination of these latter two features sometimes manifested itself in life as noticeable eye arcs. In life I noticed some white on the tail (the outertail, although the exact location wasn't always evident). An excellent photo by Lloyd Spitalnik showed the exact pattern of the tail feathers: very extensive white covering almost the entire inner webs of the outer two rectrices (R5-R6); white bleeding into the outer webs of the upper parts of the outermost rectrices (R6); and white markings on the inner webs towards the tips of the fourth rectrices.

The above description is completely consistent with Grace's Warbler, and rules out all other species of bird. The small bill rules out both Pine Warbler and Yellow-throated Warbler. The lack of complete yellow "spectacles," mostly gray back, flank streaking, and overall contrast between the upperparts and the underparts also rule out Pine Warbler. The gray face, lacking black and a bold white supercilium, as well as the lack of thick black around the yellow throat, further rule out Yellow-throated Warbler. Northern Parula, which I actually didn't even consider upon seeing the bird, can be ruled out by the yellow above the eye, the lack of greenish tones on the back, the flank streaking, and the structure (longer-tailed, more streamlined) and size.

According to criteria in Pyle, and in Dunn & Garrett, we aged the bird as a 1st winter (= SY, or second calendar-year, given that it was found in January). Figuring out the sex of this bird is more difficult. According to available references, the black markings visible on the crown are more indicative of a SY male, while the narrow, sparse flank streaking, and lack of wide black centers to the back feathers are indicative of a female of this age. The amount of brown in the back is probably in the zone of ambiguity in terms of whether this is/was a male or female, and the pattern of the rectrices falls in the overlap zone between SY male and SY female, according to the Pyle guide.

As for subspecies, all indications are that this fits very well within the (more expected, I guess, but given the lack of precedent, this expectation doesn't hold that much water) nominate subspecies *graciae*, which also happens to be the most migratory and the one that occurs the farthest north of all the subspecies. Indicators of this subspecies are the more gray-brown (rather than blue-gray) upperparts, with narrower streaking, and the fact that the part of the supercilium behind the eye is white.

Patterns of vagrancy

Pending review, this is the first record of Grace's Warbler in New York State, and also the first for the entire East Coast of North America. In fact, it is only the second record of this species east of the Mississippi River, with the first one coming at Montrose Point, Chicago, Illinois on September 8, 2003. They are extremely rare (accidental outside of southern California) anywhere in the United States of America as winterers (although not necessarily DURING the winter; it is possible that some return to their breeding grounds in mid-March while it is still technically winter, but I do not know for sure what their normal arrival dates are). This is an unprecedented record in all respects.

*This individual was not seen after January 4, 2012, and due to intense wind from the afternoon of the 1st through the 3rd, it was difficult or impossible to find for many people during most of its stay. On the 3rd it was only briefly seen early in the morning and went MIA for the entire day. This note is based closely on a report submitted to the New York State Avian Records Committee. Two photos are reproduced in this issue on page 141.

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GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH IN NEW YORK'S CATSKILL MOUNTAINS

When I was packing my pack in preparation for a winter hike in New York's Catskill Mountains, I nearly took my binos out of my pack to save weight. I thought, "I'm not going to see anything interesting in the mountains in December." Good thing I didn't leave them behind.

From the trailhead on Big Hollow Road (also called County Road 56), my companions and I set out into the Blackhead Mountains, in the northern Catskill Mountains of Greene County, New York. We hiked 1.7 miles to the saddle between Black Head and Black Dome, then about 0.6 miles to the peak of Black Dome. The latter isn't obvious (I never saw a marker), and the whole summit area above about 3500' looks very similar. It was in this area, between a viewpoint facing east toward Black Head and another facing south, that one of my companions asked me, "What's this bird that just flew off the trail?" The bird in question was finch-sized, with an unmistakable brownish-pink hue, gray and black crown, and bright pink on the belly and wings.

When I saw the bird, I immediately knew what it was but was afraid to say anything, because what I was seeing seemed impossible: Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch! I was speechless for a moment, thinking at any second it would fly off, and surely no one would believe me! My friends weren't birders, but on seeing how excited I became, they got very excited too, and we stayed and watched and photographed the bird for 20 minutes or so. A photo is reproduced in this issue on page 142.

The bird was perched only 15' off the ground and seemed to be waiting until we left so it could go back to feeding on the ground on the trail. Eventually, we were able to walk directly under the bird, where I could take a picture that showed enough detail to be identifiable. The exact coordinates of the site are: 42 degrees 16.199' N, 74 degrees 07.361' W.

It appears to be an adult of the interior race, and furthermore seems to be individually distinct from the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch that appeared in north of Utica, NY, in March, having some different markings on the face and a lesser extent of pink in the body and wings.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON – WINTER 2011-12

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In the winter of 2010-11, New York State experienced a cold snowy winter, typical of the seventies and eighties and colder than the more recent past. This year's winter of 2011-12 was remarkably warm, with temperatures running higher than normal. This was a La Niña year and higher temperatures are expected in the eastern US under this condition, but the temperature increases exceeded past experience. New York City saw a November and December without snow for the first time since 1877 and western NY experienced about half the normal annual snowfall through February. December, January, and February temperatures averaged 5.0° F above average throughout the state and New York City experienced its warmest February ever. Although snow levels were low, precipitation totals were normal to slightly below normal through most of the state except Long Island, which was unusually dry. Most lakes, ponds, and streams experienced periodic freezing but were ice free throughout most of the season.

The warmer weather conditions prompted a number of trends. Casual observations noted early migration of waterfowl, lingering warblers, early nesting of some species, and a lack of winter finch movements. It is apparent to even casual observers that birds adapt their lives to changing conditions. February brought larger than normal concentrations of ducks, geese, and swans including some of the less hardy ducks, and several Regional editors noted indications of earlier than normal spring waterfowl migration based on the early arrival of Snow Geese. But open water in Region 5 led to lower waterfowl totals for that area. Turkey Vultures overwintered or were reported as early arrivals throughout the state and we continue to receive reports of ever-increasing sightings of Black Vulture. Bonaparte's Gulls remained on the Niagara River long past their normal departure dates. It was another winter with higher than normal sightings of Snowy Owls and Northern Shrikes. During December, there was a higher incidence of warblers lingering in the state; most of these disappeared in January but a few remained. Five species of warblers were found in Niagara County and most remarkable was a total of 16 species of warblers in Region 10, many of these in multiple numbers, and some wintering over successfully. Generally, the usual half-hardies such as Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, etc. were found in the expected numbers in most Regions but about half of the Regional editors noted above average numbers of these birds. During winter, early nesting of some species was reported. Ring-necked Pheasants were breeding and Tom Turkeys displaying in January; Pine Siskins were breeding in February. It was a normal winter for wintering finches with no significant movements to the south and west, suggesting that the warmer weather and, no doubt, food supply provided less incentive for winter dispersal. Winter finches were recorded in normal numbers in the northern reaches of the

state. Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, and Lapland Longspurs were not as concentrated and were more difficult to locate than in normal snowy winters.

Greater White-Fronted Geese were reported in every Region except one, with a maximum of eight in one group in Region 10. Eight Regions reported Cackling Geese, with the highest concentrations in the eastern-most part of the state (Regions 1, 2 & 3). Late Brant were found away from their usual coastal wintering areas in three Regions in December and a fourth was at Buffalo Harbor on 28 Feb. There were a total of six reports for Ross's Geese, all singles, with four of these coming from Region 3 and one each from Regions 1 and 10. King Eiders were more numerous than usual with six Regions accepting a total of 17 reports including a maximum of three birds in Region 2, and slightly less than half of the reports coming from Region 10. There were eight reports for Barrow's Goldeneye in three Regions, with a maximum of three from Region 6. Unusual waterfowl from Region 10 included a Pink-footed Goose, a single Barnacle Goose and a Eurasian Green-winged Teal.

The only Pacific Loon reported was from Hamlin Beach on 9 Feb. Three *Aechmophorus* grebes were on Cayuga Lake, one identified as a Western Grebe. Eared Grebes were reported from Region 10 and from Cayuga Lake as late as 5 Feb. An American White Pelican was well described from the NYS Barge Canal in Fairport on 3 Dec after likely the same bird was seen up to 1 Dec in Lewiston. We received 22 reports of Golden Eagles from seven of the ten state Regions but the majority of these reports are concentrated in the center of the state (Regions 3, 4, 5, & 6). Two gray morph Gyrfalcons were seen this winter, one at Oswego Harbor on 18 Jan and the other at Jones Beach on 14 Jan. A dark morph Gyrfalcon was seen at Montario Point in Ellisburg on 2 Feb. Merlins were reported in good numbers, some throughout the winter. A high count of 19 Bald Eagles came from the lower Hudson in Region 9.

American Woodcock were reported every month of the winter and early breeding was suspected since displaying was observed on Long Island in February. All the southeastern Regions reported them by February (Regions 4, 8, 9 &10) and one was found at Point Peninsula on 10 Feb. A small flock of nine Purple Sandpipers at Sodus Bay in mid December was unusual for Upstate. Parasitic Jaegers were recorded off Long Island on 9 Dec and two were sighted in Rochester on 18 Dec and 2 Jan. An unidentified jaeger was at Lewiston on 4 Dec and one Pomarine Jaeger was seen at Derby Hill on 16 Dec. Black-legged Kittiwakes were well reported in five Regions with the last report on 19 Feb from the Niagara River. Slaty-backed Gulls were seen on the Niagara River on 13 Dec and in Beacon on the Hudson on 21 Jan. The only Franklin's Gull in the state had continued from the past fall on the Niagara River until early December. The only alcid away from the coastal regions was a Razorbill that was eventually found dead 3 Dec at Fort Niagara. Alcids were as expected off Rye, Long Island, and on pelagic trips. Dovekie, Common Murre, and Razorbills were all reported in multiples. Singles included a Black Guillemot from Montauk and an Atlantic Puffin from the 30 Dec pelagic trip.

A total of 85 reports of Snowy Owls, numbering likely more than 100 birds, was received from throughout the state. This is among the largest incursion ever;

six were banded in Region 2. Every Region reported Short-eared Owls but most in very low numbers. The only exception was a total of 16 in Region 6 in mid January. A calling Barn Owl in Williamstown in Region 5 was the only one reported away from Long Island. There were no records of the other three boreal owl species.

Northern Shrikes were also recorded in numbers above average, although they were more concentrated in the western and northern parts of the state and absent from only one Region. Fish Crow continues to expand into the state with record numbers listed by some Regions; seven Regions reported them this winter. As mentioned, it was not a big year for finches in areas normally frequented during winter. Also, Evening Grosbeak sightings continue to be low with the exception of those reported in Region 7; they were recorded in three other Regions but in very small numbers.

No doubt that the warblers lingering into December and January were winter highlights throughout the state and provided many opportunities to get out and chase rarities. Readers should consult the Regional reports for details on the rarer species since this summary cannot cover all of them. Other more unusual birds reported included: Lark Sparrows from Regions 1 & 2; a Baltimore Oriole in Region 4 on 17 Dec; an extremely late Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Brighton, Region 2, on 19 Dec; Yellow-headed Blackbird on 8 Dec, Baltimore Oriole on 9 Jan, and a **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** on 23 Dec, all reported from Region 8; a Rufous Hummingbird present in Region 9 until 18 Dec; and Black Rail, Mountain Bluebird, Sedge Wren and three Rufous Hummingbirds, one of which successfully overwintered, from Region 10.

The warm winter conditions produced an above average number of species in most Regions for the winter months and the warblers were a definite highlight. The most unusual among these was the **Grace's Warbler**, New York's first report for this species. It was discovered by Andrew Baksh and Doug Gochfeld at Point Lookout during the Southern Nassau CBC on 1 Jan. Word spread quickly and more than 100 people observed the bird within a few hours of its discovery. The other very unusual find this winter was the **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** discovered by David Rankin on Blackhead Mountain Trail in Green County when he was at 3800 ft. elevation near the top of Black Dome Mountain. If accepted by NYSARC, both of these would be first state records. From my viewpoint, I am going to have to select both of these unusual sightings to share the "Bird of the Season" honors.

REGION 1—NIAGARA FRONTIER

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It was the warmest winter in recent memory and tied for fourth warmest on record. At times the only thing that seemed like winter was the calendar. The average temperature in December 2011 was 35.5° F, 5.4° F above normal. Monthly precipitation at Buffalo-Niagara International Airport was 3.62", 0.27" less than usual, with only 3.8" of snow, 23.6" less than usual. January 2012 remained warmer. The average temperature was 30.3°, 5.4° above normal. The monthly precipitation was 4.43", 1.25" above normal, with 20.8" of snow, 4.5" less than normal. The warmer trend continued in February. The average temperature was 31.7°, again 5.4° above normal. The monthly precipitation was 1.72", 0.77" below normal, with 9.6" of snowfall, 7.7" below normal. Several strong wind events occurred associated with passing cold fronts. There were four consecutive months with a mean temperature greater than 5° above normal and 11 months in a row with above average temperatures. Lake Erie did not freeze.

The unusually warm weather influenced the occurrence and distribution of birds, as well as birding, in several respects. December brought an unprecedented number of winter warblers to a Region where they seldom occur. First winter records, all from December, were obtained for **Black-and-white Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler**, and **Wilson's Warbler**, while **Common Yellowthroat** and the regular-in-winter Yellow-rumped Warbler were also recorded. The warm weather was likely a factor in keeping these birds alive longer than otherwise. Only the Orange-crowned Warbler continued through most of the winter where it was seen on Goat Island through early February. Surprisingly, there was not an abundance of the so-called "half hardies" like Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, and Gray Catbird beyond December, but it is easy to surmise that it was an easier winter than usual on most species. There was anecdotal evidence from some birders that their feeders were less active than usual this winter.

By late January it became apparent that Lake Erie was not going to freeze. Waterfowl were still plentiful on the Niagara River and at Dunkirk Harbor; however, there was less of a concentration effect at these locations than occurs when Lake Erie freezes. Mallards and Canada Geese were less plentiful along the Niagara River in mid-winter, while they remained throughout the winter in inland locations, where they often depart from by mid-January or when ponds are frozen over. Waterfowl are known to make facultative movements during mild winters to take advantage of available foraging areas. However, flat out early migration was experienced this winter. Several dabbling duck species appeared in early February at multiple locations. Geese were on the move in early February, too. Region 1 is largely outside the migration route for **Snow Geese**; however, unprecedented numbers appeared along Lake Ontario in early

February, likely aided by some easterly winds. The first clear-cut migrant Tundra Swans arrived on 20 February and more followed; a few weeks ahead of the normal migration phenology.

In many years, Bonaparte's Gulls become scarce on the Niagara River in mid-winter. However, thousands remained this year. The waters around Squaw Island in Buffalo drew strong attention from the gulls and birders, as a **Black-headed Gull** foraged there with the thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls through at least early February. Multiple **Black-legged Kittiwakes** and Little Gulls were also seen in this area.

The warmer weather prompted earlier than usual breeding activity. Jerry Farrel reported that there were four Ring-necked Pheasant nests with eggs on 28 January and more that followed at the 3F pheasant program in Niagara County, the earliest he'd ever seen. Wild Turkey toms were observed displaying in late January and early February, which seemed about a month early.

The earlier spring migrants started to arrive in mid-February, e.g., blackbirds, robins, and bluebirds. Song Sparrows started to appear by late February to supplement the wintering birds. Turkey Vulture migrants arrived in mid-February. They are also becoming more regular in winter. A roost in Lewiston contained up to 11 through the winter and increased to 16 in February. More surprisingly, **six Black Vultures** also overwintered in Lewiston. Both vulture species have occurred with increased regularity in the lower Niagara River area in recent years, and Black Vultures were sighted there over most of the past year. It is uncertain if the atypical winter had a causal effect on the vultures wintering in Lewiston; however, it certainly made conditions more hospitable for them. Still, there were several occasions when Black Vultures were witnessed standing atop chimneys to gather warmth.

Waterfowl highlights not previously mentioned included up to four Harlequin Ducks spending much of the winter together in the rapids above Niagara Falls and two **King Eiders** and the regularly wintering **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Point Breeze on Lake Ontario. **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported from three locations in late December and early January, and then a group of four migrants arrived on 29 February. A **Ross's Goose** was identified at the Gypsum Ponds in Oakfield in late December, and David Gordon identified a **Brant** at Buffalo Harbor for only the third February Regional record.

Merlin sightings are becoming numerous in winter and all other seasons. Bald Eagles were widely reported again. Rough-legged Hawks were relatively scarce this winter. There were two **Northern Goshawk** sightings. The winter raptor highlight was a **Golden Eagle** seen and photographed soaring over Wolf Run in Allegany SP by Jeff Reed. Reed has observed Golden Eagles at this location on a nearly annual basis in recent winters.

Gull highlights not previously mentioned included a **Slaty-backed Gull** observed and photographed by Jim Pawlicki, Bill Watson, and Joe Mitchell above Niagara Falls at Goat Island on 8 December. The gull had been found on 3 December on the Ontario side of the river and observed there through at least the 13th. This was the only documented occurrence on the New York side. A

Franklin's Gull continued from the fall season into early December on the Niagara River. **California Gull** was documented at Niagara Falls SP on 18 December and then on several occasions in February at Devil's Hole SP, marking only the third February record.

The Razorbill continued from November where the Niagara River empties into Lake Ontario off Fort Niagara SP. Nick Sly observed the apparently dead **Razorbill** floating in the water on 3 December.

There were more **Snowy Owls** this winter than any other in at least 15-20 years. Only one (or possibly more than one) on the breakwalls in Buffalo Harbor and one in a field in Yates were long-staying at one location. Two separate owls were seen dead along roadsides in Lewiston. Chuck Rosenburg of the NYSDEC reported that an injured Snowy Owl was captured inside a defunct furnace near the Buffalo waterfront. It had entered through a fifty foot chimney and had been injured presumably when trying to escape by the same chimney. Rosenburg found it very unusual that this bird of the arctic flatlands was investigating artificial tunnels around buildings for prey. **Short-eared Owls** were found mostly at locations where they have been previously documented in recent winters.

Region 1 finally has its long-awaited first documented **Fish Crow** after a handful of possible or probable reports in recent years. Jeff Reed documented one that he heard and saw on at least two occasions in Olean in January. Just a few days after his initial sighting, several Fish Crows were discovered at a pre-roost in Fort Erie, Ontario just across the Niagara River from Buffalo. Birders observed up to five Fish Crows at this location over the next month. On one occasion, Jim Pawlicki observed what he suspected was a Fish Crow flying over the river toward the Buffalo crow roost. Pawlicki and others also heard Fish Crow-like calls several times while inspecting the Buffalo crow roost in Delaware Park and Forest Lawn Cemetery; however, they were never able to sight the crows making the calls to verify. In all likelihood Fish Crows roosted in Buffalo this winter.

It was not a big winter for finches. Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls occurred but they were not widespread or in large numbers. There were five reports of **White-winged Crossbill,** but no reports of Red Crossbill or Evening Grosbeak. Purple Finches were scarce, as evidenced by a total of only four birds seen over two CBCs.

Other highlights not previously mentioned include an **American White Pelican** observed flying across the Niagara River toward Lewiston on 1 December, a **Pomarine/Parasitic Jaeger** at the Niagara Power Project on the Niagara River, three reports of **Bohemian Waxwing**, an apparent adult male **"Oregon" Junco** in Yates, and the second winter record of **Lark Sparrow** found by Jeanne Skelly and Gary Chapin in Yates in January.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AlSP – Allegany SP, CATT; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP, ERIE; BWWTP – Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, GENE; ChauL – Chautauqua L, CHAU; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; FMCSP - Four Mile Creek SP, NIAG; FNSP – Fort Niagara SP, NIAG; GHSP – Golden Hill SP, NIAG; INWR – Iroquois NWR, GENE/ORLE; LBSP – Lakeside Beach SP, ORLE; MI – Motor I NR, ERIE; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NFSP – Niagara Falls SP, NIAG; NPP – Niagara Power Project on NR, Lewiston, NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA; GENE/ORLE; PB – Point Breeze, ORLE; RTPI – Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown CHAU; SPNS – Sinking Ponds Nature Sanctuary ERIE; Tifft NP – Tifft NP, ERIE; TWMA – Tonawanda WMA, NIAG/GENE; WTSP – Wilson-Tuscarora SP, NIAG; WoBSP – Woodlawn Beach SP, ERIE.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

G. White-fronted Goose: 2 Oakfield GENE 29 Dec (JP!); max 7 OOWMA 30 Dec (CM!); 2 Somerset NIAG 1 Jan (WD!); arr 4 Shelby GENE 29 Feb (CM!).

Snow Goose: six Dec reports; PB 4 Jan; LBSP 6 Jan; Olcott NIAG 15 Jan; arr 2700 Yates ORLE 4 Feb (AH); max 5650, 4000 Yates ORLE 5, 10 Feb (JP, WW, RS), record count for Reg; 240 Somerset NIAG 11 Feb; 2000 Carlton ORLE 13 Feb; 25 Pomfret CHAU 18 Feb; 175 Barre GENE 25 Feb; unprecedented numbers in Feb, early.

ROSS'S GOOSE: Oakfield GENE 28, 29 Dec (KF, JP), third winter record.

Brant: Buffalo Harbor ERIE 28 Feb (DG!), only third Feb record.

Cackling Goose: Cambria NIAG 24 Dec; INWR 28 Dec; 3 Oakfield GENE 28 Dec; max 9 BWWTP 29 Dec (KF); SPNS 31 Dec; 7 Oakfield GENE 4 Jan; LBSP 6 Jan (BC); arr Yates ORLE 4, 5 Feb (AH, WW, JP), with large Snow Geese flock.

Mute Swan: 2 Lewiston NR 8 Dec; Cassadaga CHAU 26 Dec; max 10 PB 1 Jan, 5 Feb; also reported from 5 L Ontario locations.

Trumpeter Swan: 2 OOWMA 1 Dec; Holland ERIE 4 Dec (JW); max 4 BeSP 18 Dec (ER); 2 TWMA 28 Dec; 2 INWR 18 Feb.

Tundra Swan: 28 OOWMA 1 Dec; 111 NF 30 Dec; 40 ChauL 31 Dec; 78, 86 Shelby ORLE 16, 27 Dec; 159, 168 BeSP 15 Jan, 20 Feb; arr 9 INWR 20 Feb; max 186 INWR 27 Feb; 88 Alexander GENE 28 Feb.

Wood Duck: OOWMA 1 Dec; Buffalo NR 19 Dec, 15 Jan; 4 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; Williamsville ERIE 15 Jan; arr SPNS 26 Feb; 2 Royalton NIAG 27 Feb.

Gadwall: 25 INWR 23 Dec; 77 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; 100 ChauL 29 Dec; 12 NFSP 9 Jan; arr 6 TWMA 4 Feb; 7 INWR 6 Feb.

Am. Wigeon: BWWTP 12 Jan; arr Alden ERIE 1 Feb; 15 OOWMA, 8 TWMA 4 Feb; early arrivals.

Am. Black Duck: 195 Oakfield GENE, 70 OOWMA 30 Dec (CM); 32, 48 BWWTP 8 Jan, 3 Feb; 27, 152 OOWMA 4, 5 Feb; 57 Yates ORLE 4 Feb; unusually high counts for winter and early arrivals.

Mallard: max 660, 1669 BWWTP 8 Jan, 3 Feb (WW, KF), unusually high counts for winter.

N. Shoveler: 15, 8 BWWTP 18 Dec, 4-14 Jan; Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; arr BeSP 5 Feb, early; 2 Fredonia CHAU 26 Feb.

N. Pintail: five reports Dec & Jan; arr 4 BWWTP 3 Feb; 28 INWR, 23 OOWMA 4 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: 2 Tifft NP 10 Dec; 5 Dayton CATT 25 Dec; Lackawanna ERIE 26 Dec, 1 Jan; 3 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; NFSP 3, 20 Jan; Jamestown CHAU 15 Jan; 2 PB 28 Jan, 4 Feb, arrivals?

Canvasback: 900 NF 26 Dec; 2400 BeSP 16 Jan; max 2600 BuSP 8 Feb; 720 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 28 Feb.

Redhead: 349, 500 ChauL 4, 26 Dec (JB, TL); 90 NF 26 Dec; max 2300 NF NR 15 Jan (GR), higher than usual for one location; 350 Grand Island NR 30 Jan; 202 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 28 Feb.
Ring-necked Duck: 44, 39 NF 3, 26 Dec; BWWTP 29 Dec; 20 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 4 Jan; 2 ChauL 18 Feb, arrivals?; arr 3 OOWMA 25 Feb; 2 Fredonia CHAU 26 Feb.
Greater Scaup: 27 ChauL 1 Jan; max 6800 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 2 Feb (WW).
Lesser Scaup: 7 BWWTP 1 Dec; max 375, 250 ChauL 4. 26 Dec; 5 BusP 15 Jan; BWWTP 3 Feb.
King Eider: 2 PB 27 Dec (CW); only report.
Harlequin Duck: 2-4 NF 3 Dec - 25 Feb (mob), impressive number for one location.
Surf Scoter: 7, 1, 2 PB 1 Dec, 2 Jan, 1 Feb; WTSP 15 Jan; DH 18 Feb; only reports.
White-winged Scoter: 3 DH 26 Jan; only report away from NR, L Ontario.
Black Scoter: max 7, 2 FNSP 3, 27 Dec; 1, 3 DH 14, 26 Dec; 2 PB 25 Dec, 19 Jan, 4 Feb; 2 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 19 Feb.
Bufflehead: max 1000 Squaw I NR 26 Dec (GP).
Com. Goldeneye: 500 NF 10 Dec; SPNS 1 Jan; max 2200 NR 16 Jan (NS); 35 BWWTP 4 Feb.
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: PB 24- 27 Dec; 4, 16 Jan (CC, AG, CW, JP!), likely same male that has wintered here for several years.
Hooded Merganser: 116 INWR 1 Dec; 102, 100 DH 14, 26 Dec; 201, 370 ChauL 14, 24 Dec; 50 AlSP 26 Dec; 66 N Tonawanda NR 29 Jan; arr 6 Tifft NP 2 Feb; 2 BWWTP 3 Feb.
Com. Merganser: 60 AlSP, 110 Allegheny Res CATT 26 Dec; max 910 Strawberry I NR 29 Jan.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 2545 Grand I NR 18 Jan; 1800 Buffalo Harbor ERIE 2 Feb.
Ruddy Duck: 11 OOWMA 1 Dec; 69, 18, 1 BWWTP 9, 18, 28 Dec; 386, 200 ChauL 16, 31 Dec; max 865 Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; BeSP 24 Jan; Grand Island NR 7, 10 Feb; 3 DH 18 Feb; ChauL 25 Feb.
Ring-necked Pheasant: 4 nests with eggs Lewiston NIAG 28 Jan (JFa), earliest ever for 3F pheasant program.
Wild Turkey: several toms displaying late January; early.
Red-throated Loon: DH 14, 28 Dec; max 78 FMCSP 27 Dec; Barcelona CHAU 27 Dec; Ripley CHAU 30 Dec; 23 Shadigee ORLE, 14 Somerset NIAG 1 Jan; Yates ORLE, Olcott NIAG 5 Feb; 4 PB 8 Feb.
Com. Loon: SPNS 1, 3 Dec; ChauL 31 Dec; Somerset NIAG, Shadigee ORLE 1 Jan; BuSP 22 Jan; only reports beyond Dec.
Pied-billed Grebe: BeSP 1-10 Jan; ChauL 8 Jan; max 6, 6 DH 18, 26 Jan.
Horned Grebe: 60 Barcelona CHAU 26 Dec; 70 DH 27 Dec; max 123 Somerset NIAG, 66 Yates ORLE 1 Jan; 47 Carlton ORLE 19 Jan.
Red-necked Grebe: 11 PB, 2 ChauL 27 Dec; max 78 Yates ORLE, 65 Somerset NIAG 1 Jan (WD); GHSP, Shadigee 22 Jan; 12 Olcott NIAG 5 Feb; 6 PB 27 Feb.
AM. WHITE PELICAN: Lewiston NIAG 1 Dec, after several days at pond in Ontario was observed departing and flying states side to Lewiston.
Double-crested Cormorant: 3 INWR 1 Dec; max 247 DH 14 Dec; 7 Lewiston NR 19 Feb.
Great Blue Heron: 27 DH 14 Dec; max 26, 49 MI 3, 27 Feb.
BLACK VULTURE: 1-6 Lewiston NIAG through (mob); first documented overwintering.
Turkey Vulture: 11-16 Lewiston NIAG through (mob); arr 2 Fredonia CHAU 1 Feb; Bethany GENE, Jamestown CHAU, Lancaster ERIE, Grand Island ERIE 13 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 7 DH 22 Jan; well reported from other traditional wintering and breeding areas.
N. Harrier: 6 Alexander GENE 24 Dec (DB, ED); max 10 Shelby ORLE 22 Dec (CM), winter roosts.
N. Goshawk: ad Wilson NIAG 17, 19 Dec (BM, BG); AlSP 29 Dec (JR); only reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 1, 2 Busti CHAU 11 Dec, 4 Feb; 2 RTPI 4 Jan; Stockton CHAU 11 Jan; Ashford CATT 7-27 Feb; AlSP 22 Feb; only reports.
Rough-legged Hawk: not widely reported.
GOLDEN EAGLE: AlSP 15 Jan (JR!, ph), has wintered at location nearly annually.
Merlin: 15 reports throughout Reg.
Peregrine Falcon: reported from nine locations.
Am. Coot: 126 INWR 1 Dec; max 1152 ChauL 14 Dec (WW); 126, 113 DH 11 Jan, 9 Feb; 10, 33, 38 Grand Island NR 22 Jan, 15, 23 Feb.
Wilson's Snipe: 3 Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; only report.
Black-legged Kittiwake: Whirlpool SP NIAG 3-8 Dec 9 (WD, JP, WW); FNSP 4 Dec; 1-3; 1 Buffalo NR 18-22 Dec; 2-22 Jan; Buffalo Harbor ERIE 19 Feb (JP, KH), only fifth Feb report.
Bonaparte's Gull: 5500 Lewiston NR 2 Dec; 2100 Barcelona CHAU 14 Dec; max 10000 Buffalo NR 19 Dec (JP); 1136 FMCSP 27 Dec; 6500, 5000 Buffalo NR 16 Jan, 8 Feb; remained on NR through winter.

PHOTO GALLERY
Winter 2011-12

This Grace's Warbler was discovered by Doug Gochfeld and Andrew Baksh at Point Lookout, *Nassau*, during the Southern Nassau County Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan 2012. Photographs © David Krauss. See pp. 128-132.

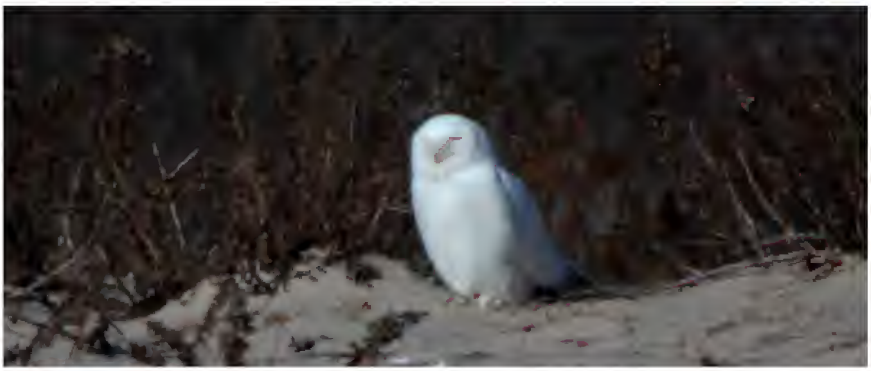
This Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch was found by David Rankin and others near the summit of Big Dome Mountain, *Greene*, 22 Dec 2011 © David Rankin. See p. 132.

This Rufous Hummingbird persisted through the winter in the gardens of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, *New York*. Photograph © Peter Post, 22 Dec 2011. See pp. 185- 194.

Western Grebes, Cayuga Lake, just north of Union Springs, *Cayuga*, 8 Feb 2012, © Jay McGowan. There was some discussion regarding whether the paler bird might have been a Western x Clark's Grebe hybrid; see pp. 157-161.

This "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler at Sunken Meadow SP, *Suffolk* (top: 26 Feb 2012, © Doug Gochfeld; above left: 10 Feb 2012, © S. S. Mitra) was a rare vagrant from western North America. It was distinguished from the regularly occurring "Myrtle" Warbler (above right: 15 Jan 2012) by its plain face pattern, its square-shaped yellow throat, differences in the pattern of white in the tail feathers, and differences in call note.

This adult male stood out among the many Snowy Owls found in NY during winter 2011-12. First seen during the Captree CBC at Fire Island Inlet, *Suffolk* on 18 Dec (© S. S. Mitra), it appeared on the Southern Nassau County CBC on 1 Jan (© Seth Ausubel), and was recorded at Breezy Point, *Queens*, on 5 Feb (© Corey Finger).



Photos from the New York State Avian Records Committee's Annual Report for 2010

Mississippi Kites, Root, *Montgomery*, 20 and 28 Aug 2010. Photographs © Richard Guthrie (left) and Jesse Jaycox (right). Confirmation of the first successful nesting in NYS was obtained with this fledgling being fed by the adults in trees near the nest.

Mew Gull, Devil's Hole SP, *Niagara* 7 Jan 2010. Photograph © James Pawlicki. Careful photo documentation established this adult bird (top right) as the first example of the nominate subspecies *canus* ('Common Gull') on the Niagara River.

Barnacle Goose, Orchard Beach, *Bronx*, 27 Nov 210. Photographs © Andrew Baksh and © Jack Rothman (insets). Banded in Scotland in 2002, this is only the third record of a marked bird for North America and provides solid evidence for natural vagrancy to NYS.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Tonawanda WMA, *Genesee*, 11 Aug 2010. Photograph © Will Stuart. Often secretive, this was one of seven individuals recorded in NYS during the summer of 2010, evidently part of a major incursion into the Northeast.

Hermit Warbler, Sunken Meadow SP, *Suffolk*, 5 Dec 2010. Photograph © Jason Silverman. Furnishing a 1st NYS record, this hatching-year female favored an area of coastal bushes, often flying out onto a short grass lawn where it gleaned insects.

Kirtland's Warbler, Burt, *Niagara*, 18 May 2010. Sketch © Betsy Potter. This striking and distinctive male was observed briefly during a period of strong warbler migration along the shore of Lake Ontatio but disappeared before it could be photographed.

Black-headed Gull: Buffalo NR 18-26 Dec, 12 Jan – 5 Feb (JW, JP, mob), long staying bird.
Little Gull: Whirlpool SP NIAG 11 Dec; max 7, 3, 10 Lewiston NR 26 Dec, 17 Jan, 25 Feb (CW, NS, AW); 1-4 Buffalo NR 7-30 Jan; 2 Barcelona CHAU 18 Jan (JP, WW).
FRANKLIN'S GULL: NPP 3, 4 Dec (WD), continued from fall.
CALIFORNIA GULL: NFSP 18 Dec (LL, RD); Devils Hole SP NIAG 5, 8 Feb (JP!), only third Feb record.
Thayer's Gull: Devils Hole SP NIAG 16 Dec, 8 Feb (JP!, ph); several other undocumented reports NPP, NF.
Iceland Gull: max 10, 18 NPP 18 Dec, 15 Jan; 35 NPP 12 Feb (BC, WD, AW), record count.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: Buffalo Harbor ERIE 10 Dec; max 12 NFSP 10 Dec; 9 NFSP 18 Dec; PB 30 Dec; LESP 3 Jan; Sardinia ERIE 25 Jan (JP, WW); 7 NF 21 Feb.
SLATY-BACKED GULL: ad NFSP 8 Dec (WW, JP, JM, ph, NYSARC); seen several times on Ontario side of NR 3-13 Dec.
Glaucous Gull: Buffalo Harbor ERIE 10 Dec; BeSP 16 Jan; 2 Sardinia ERIE 25 Jan; DH 26 Jan; max 3 NFSP 3 Feb; NPP 9 Feb; 2 Porter NIAG 18 Feb; Tonawanda NR 19 Feb.
Glaucous x Herring Gull: 1, 1 Devils Hole SP NIAG 26 Dec, 8 Feb (CW, JP); annual on NR.
Great Black-backed Gull: 47 WoBSP 26 Dec; max 200, 462 DH 26 Dec, 15 Feb (TL, JP).
jaeger species: NPP 4 Dec (BC, sev ob); some felt Pomarine, some felt Parasitic; jaegers on NR rare.
RAZORBILL: FNSP thru 3 Dec (WD! NYSARC), continued from fall, observed dead in water 3 Dec (NS).

PIGEONS -WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: Buffalo Harbor ERIE 10-28 Dec, 6-25 Jan (PY, JP), likely multiple birds; Cheektowaga ERIE 17 Dec (G&MC), on Target store; Lewiston NIAG 30 Dec (CA), dead; FNSP 15 Jan; Hume ALLE 15 Jan; Wilson NIAG 16 Jan; Squaw I NR 20 Jan; Yates ORLE 22 Jan thru (WD, mob); Buffalo ERIE 30 Jan (CR), injured, DEC captured bird that entered chimney; Lewiston NIAG 10 Feb, dead; Pembroke GENE 21 Feb; max 4 NF Airport NIAG 26 Feb (CR); best showing in years.
Long-eared Owl: Olcott NIAG 5 Feb (PY), only report.
Short-eared Owl: BeSP 9 Dec (JL); 3, 6 Alexander GENE 22 Dec, 20 Jan (DB, ED); 1, 3, 6 Shelby ORLE 22 Dec, 22 Jan, 10 Feb (CM, RS); 3 Hartland NIAG 14 Jan (CC); Lockport NIAG 3 Feb; Yates ORLE 4, 10 Feb; mostly usual winter locations.
N. Saw-whet Owl: 3 Ellicott CHAU 18 Dec (JB), only report.
Red-headed Woodpecker: LBSP 3 Dec through 4 Feb, only reports.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Fredonia CHAU 3 Jan (JG); Darien GENE 19 Jan; only reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: well reported throughout Reg.
Am. Crow: max 1200, 2000 Buffalo ERIE 31 Jan, 27 Feb (CC, JFe), roost; likely undercounted.
FISH CROW: Olean CATT 10, 22 Jan (JR!); first documented for Reg; 1-5 observed in Fort Erie ONT across NR from Buffalo 15 Jan – 19 Feb, a few 'small' crows observed flying over NR to Buffalo roost; several calls heard among roost but crows giving them not seen.
Com. Raven: 2 Marilla ERIE 8 Jan; GHSP 22 Jan (CC); Tonawanda ERIE 19 Feb (RS!), unusual location; only reports away from typical range.
Horned Lark: 84 Oakfield GENE 14 Jan; 76 Bethany GENE 14 Jan; 75 Shelby ORLE 14 Jan; max 297 Albion ORLE 20 Feb.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: poor showing; 27 on eight CBCs.
Winter Wren: five Dec reports; NFSP 27 Jan; Wilson NIAG 30 Jan.
MARSH WREN: BWWTP 1 Dec (WW), late.
E. Bluebird: well reported; migrants started to arrive in mid-Feb.
Hermit Thrush: Wilson CBC 17 Dec; 2 NFSP 18 Dec; only reports.
Am. Robin: well reported; migrants started to arrive in mid-Feb.
Gray Catbird: six on CBCs plus five other Dec reports; surprisingly none later in mild winter.
N. Mockingbird: 9 Lackawanna ERIE 26 Dec; Tifft NP 9 Jan; Alexander GENE 15 Jan; Alden ERIE 2 Feb; only reports away from core NIAG range.
Brown Thrasher: Porter NIAG 27 Dec (BP, WD), rare in winter.
Am. Pipit: 30 Wilson NIAG 2 Dec, only report.
Bohemian Waxwing: LBSP 2 Dec (CH, GR); Newfane NIAG 29 Jan (WD, BB); 20 WTSP 1 Feb (BP); only reports.
Cedar Waxwing: max 300 Newfane NIAG 29 Jan.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 29 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; Yates ORLE 14 Jan; Bethany GENE 15

Jan; 9 Wilson NIAG 21 Jan; 3, 2 Somerset NIAG 11, 18 Feb; Lyndonville NIAG 12 Feb.
Snow Bunting: max 300, 700 Albion ORLE 15, 17 Jan (CM); 575 Elba GENE 21 Jan; 130 Wilson NIAG 21 Jan.
BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: Spicer Creek WMA ERIE 18 Dec (MZ!), first winter record.
ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: NFSP 23 Dec – 3 Feb (BC!, mob), first winter record.
C. Yellowthroat: TWMA 29 Dec – 4 Jan (JP, JM), rare in winter.
BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER: Amherst ERIE 29, 30 Dec (CD), at feeder, first winter record.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 5, 1 BuSP 3 Dec, 6 Jan; Spicer Creek WMA ERIE 19 Dec; OOWMA 29 Dec; Alden ERIE 14, 16 Feb; 3 Chautauqua Institution CHAU 17 Feb (JB); good showing.
WILSON'S WARBLER: Williamsville ERIE through 7 Dec (RS!), continued from fall, first winter record.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: PB 1 Dec; Salamanca CATT 7-15 Feb; Bethany GENE 11-18 Feb; only reports.
Chipping Sparrow: Portland CHAU 16 Jan (CH), only report.
Field Sparrow: 2 Alexander GENE 31 Jan (ED), only report.
LARK SPARROW: Yates ORLE 21 Jan (JS, GC, NYSARC), 2nd winter report.
Savannah Sparrow: Hartland NIAG 13, 14 Jan (CC); Yates ORLE 22 Jan (WD, WW); still rare in winter.
Swamp Sparrow: 24 on five CBCs; reported from six other loc.
White-crowned Sparrow: max 2, 14 Bethany GENE 3, 22 Dec; 4 Porter NIAG 4 Jan; 2 Hartland NIAG 13, 22 Jan; 3 Medina ORLE 8 Feb.
Dark-eyed Junco *(J. h oreganus):* Yates ORLE 14 Jan (WD, BP), apparent adult male.
Red-winged Blackbird: 100 TWMA 1 Jan (MM); arr 4 Eden ERIE 9 Feb; more numerous migrants 20-29 Feb.
Rusty Blackbird: 2 Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; 12 E Aurora ERIE 31 Dec (JP, JM); only reports.
Com. Grackle: Oak Orchard CBC 28 Dec; Grand Island ERIE 22 Jan; arr WTSP 17 Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 200 Cambria NIAG 17 Dec; arr Portland CHAU 13 Feb.
Purple Finch: very few reports; only 4 on two CBCs; max 8 ChauL 31 Dec.
White-winged Crossbill: FMCSP 15 Jan; Porter NIAG 4 Feb; 2 WTSP 4 Feb; Olcott NIAG 5 Feb; PB 8 Feb; only reports.
Com. Redpoll: 4 Yates ORLE 14 Jan; BuSP 15 Jan; 3, 7 Somerset NIAG 15, 22 Jan; 16 PB 15 Jan; Holland ERIE 4 Feb; 10 Olcott NIAG 5 Feb; 8 PB 8 Feb; 20 Devils Hole SP 10 Feb; max 30 Newfane NIAG 12 Feb; 3 Depew ERIE 20 Feb.
Pine Siskin: Buffalo ERIE 18 Dec; 12 ChauL 24 Dec (TL); max 28 Houghton ALLE 15 Jan (LW); Lockport NIAG 12 Feb; 20 E Aurora ERIE 24 Feb (LH).
Evening Grosbeak: no reports.

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REGION 2 – GENESEE

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This winter will be long remembered for its warmth and freedom from dealing with snow. All three months averaged > 5° F above normal, though no record highs were logged. The three months were the fifth warmest recorded for the period at 32.4° but were still 2° less than the warmest in 1931-32. Precipitation was near normal in December and February and 0.9" above in January, but snowfall was way below normal: December recorded only 4.9", 16.9" below normal and sixth lowest on record; January saw 19.9", 8.3" below average; and

February more than doubled those two, with 27.3", 5.8" above normal. The average snow depth for the season was only 1", and often there was extensive green grass and bare ground. Temperature data were: December - 32.5°, 5.2° above normal; January - averaged 30.2°, 5.5° above average; and February - 31.8°, 5.4° above normal. Precipitation ran: December – 2.48", 0.15" below normal; January – 3.32", 0.90" above average; and February – 3.13", 0.18" above normal.

With a winter like this, clearly one would expect to see effects in the birders' reports. Generally, waterfowl numbers for many species were high on the CBCs, and later numbers increased quickly and early toward season's end. Half-hardy passerines wintered in good numbers and were still found—with effort—through February. Examples are included in the species lists below, with numbers of reports and individuals approximate due to multiple reports of the same birds in eBird and to the possibility of a lingering bird being sighted many times. An effort was made to remove duplication from the totals. Substantially through the efforts of Dave Tetlow searching diligently, the species total for the Region for February eclipsed the previous high.

Back to a look in more detail starting with the waterfowl, we find an interesting and varying picture. Through most of the Christmas Bird Count season, most of the bodies of water in the Region were ice free. We had high to even record high counts of several waterfowl species on the three local CBCs, e.g., for Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser. Then in the waning days of December we had a cold snap with some snow and nearly all of the bays and ponds and the Finger Lakes iced over nearly completely. These reopened in a few days, but then it was warm enough that duck hunters and fishermen were everywhere and waterfowl remained scarce in most places. By the mid-January NYS Waterfowl Count, some waterfowl were returning and the overall count ended up very good. Early February found many species still present in small numbers, which increased as migrants arrived in the latter half of the month. It will be a difficult task to assign spring arrival dates for many waterbird species this year. Looking carefully at eBird data may be the best approach.

In addition to this general picture, there were some special observations around continuing trends and waterbird rarities. There was only one report of two Greater White-fronted Geese from the west edge of the Region, more to the west in Region 1. In December, Snow Geese were nearby in numbers, but few in the Region. In January and February there were several reports numbering in the thousands both in the Northern Montezuma Wetland Complex (NMWC) and from the Lake Ontario Plain west of Rochester. Cackling Goose continued through the winter, with over twenty different reports (eliminating shared list duplications) of about 45 individuals. All three swan species were reported through the season. Puddle duck variety was good each month, with some numbers very high for winter. Among the divers, numbers on Lake Ontario for all but Long-tailed Duck and Red-breasted Merganser were modest to low most of the season. Long-tailed Duck rafts are now found at many sites along the

south shore of Lake Ontario, replacing the scaup and Redhead flocks that used to winter there. But some very high numbers of Redhead were reported all season from Conesus Lake along with occasional good numbers of scaup. Also decent numbers of scaup and White-winged Scoter were noted at Point Breeze and Sodus Point at times. King Eider was found through the season at several sites, and Barrow's Goldeneye was reported at the usual Point Breeze and Sodus Point sites. Both regular loons were scarce in mid winter. A **Pacific Loon** in February was a rare find. Among the grebes, we again had the phenomena of a high number of Horned Grebes along a very local stretch of the Lake Ontario shore in Wayne County on the Waterfowl Count and again high numbers of Red-necked Grebe in early December, a trend of only the past few years. A new species for December locally was an **American White Pelican** found and photographed near Fairport on 3 December. It was likely a bird reported in several places to our west in Canada through November.

Among the raptors and allies, the ongoing trends stand out. Black Vulture continues to increase its presence in the Region, with reports of at least one individual in the Towns of Riga and Leroy through the season. In that same area Dave Tetlow also tallied a record high winter count of 81 Turkey Vultures. A **Golden Eagle** on 11 December was a rare winter record. Reports of both Northern Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawk remained very few, while Merlin and Peregrine Falcon numbers were above old norms for the season. On 15 December, Dave Mathiason and Dave Genesky road trapped a banded Red-tailed Hawk near Avon which was found to have been originally banded in the same vicinity by the late Bob McKinney on 3 March 2000.

In spite of the warm, open winter, shorebird reports were few, but quality beat quantity in late December, with counts of up to 10 Killdeer at Maxwell Creek in Wayne County and a Regional record high **nine** Purple Sandpipers, along with a Sanderling and a Dunlin, at Sodus point just a few miles east, all in the period 9-13 December. Killdeer was also reported in January and February and a Purple Sandpiper showed up at the mouth of the Genesee River from 20-22 February. Another rarity for the season was a **King Rail** from the NMWC in early December.

The local gull picture remains likely "permanently" modified by the continued hazing of gulls away from the High Acres Landfill in the Town of Perinton. This has greatly reduced winter records of rarer gulls from near there on Lake Edwards and from Irondequoit Bay. Recent efforts by Dave Tetlow and a few others to search near the Riga Landfill west of Rochester have produced good finds there. White-winged gulls were reported in small numbers through the season, highlights being the first record for Iceland Gull and the third record for Glaucous Gull for Livingston County found by Kurt Fox on Conesus Lake on 24 December. There were at least 24 reports for Lesser Black-backed Gull for the season. Rare reports included Black-legged Kittiwake of 11 December and 5 January and **Parasitic Jaeger** on the Rochester CBC on 18 December and on 2 January.

Eurasian Collared-Dove continued at the usual area in the Town of Hamlin through the season, with sporadic reports of up to five birds present.

Probably the wildest report of the season was of a record late **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** flying in front of Steve Taylor then stopping in a hedge row in the Town of Brighton on 19 December. This followed other very late reports for the species in western New York this fall.

It was a good winter for Snowy Owl. At least six individuals were banded in the Region by Tom McDonald this season, with at least 22 total reported during the season. It has always been hard to determine exact counts aside from the banded birds.

Red-headed Woodpecker has become more difficult to find locally during the winter, but one was present in the Town of Byron for much of the season, plus another was observed once in Hamlin Beach SP.

Among the passerines, a winter like this would be expected to produce a multitude of records and this season did not disappoint. Nearly all of the half-hardy species were found and many persisted or were found late in the season. The relatively regular species NOT found are the easiest to cover: Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Eastern Meadowlark. Among those reported, it is only possible to detail the most interesting or exceptional here and to urge the reader to study the records in the species section. Good numbers of Northern Shrike were reported each month. American Crow again set a new record high count at the Rochester roost on the 18 December CBC. Later a flap arose over the numbers and their impact on the neighborhood, and the USDA Wildlife Services Division was engaged to disperse the birds. The results are somewhat clouded by the fact that in most recent winters they have left the main site following the New Year's Eve fireworks display nearby, and the dispersal work did not begin this year until after that time. There was also the protest encampment under their main roost which had already decreased the numbers a bit. Again this winter, Fish Crows visited feeders in the Charlotte area, with a maximum of 16 reported. Surprisingly, Winter Wren and Hermit Thrush were not particularly widely reported, but Dave Tetlow turned up four and three Winter Wrens on 28 February in Rochester parks on opposite sides of the Genesee River. Through December, late Gray Catbirds were all over the place, with an incredible **eight** in one small area in Hamlin Beach SP on 14 December; then no more reports after December. The lone Brown Thrasher was found in late January. American Pipit is relatively rare in winter, but Dave Tetlow found and video taped a flock of at least 23 birds in the Town of West Sparta, Livingston County 21 January. Back there with Kurt Fox, they also located 26 American Pipits and 18 Savannah Sparrows in that same area on 22 January. Among the warblers, the usual species were present: Common Yellowthroat in four locations; Pine Warbler in Webster and Hamlin Beach SP, but present all winter in the latter location with up to five individuals reported; and Yellow-rumped Warbler, with a maximum of 23 on 23 December at the Caledonia Fish Hatchery, a known wintering site. Icing on the cake was a record late **Wilson's Warbler** found by Gary Chapin on the Rochester CBC in Durand-Eastman Park on 18 December. It was seen by several others that day and through 22 December. Late half-hardy sparrows included multiple Eastern Towhees, Chipping sparrow, Field Sparrow, many Savannah Sparrows, Fox Sparrow, and

White-crowned Sparrows. Another bonus bird was the Region's fifth **Lark Sparrow** found by Dave Tetlow at a feeder in the Town of Kendall, Orleans County on 29 January. It was later enjoyed by many and stayed past season's end. An odd-looking junco coming to the feeders of Wade and Melissa Rowley in North Wolcott, Wayne County, made the online ID discussion sites. It was in the **Dark-eyed ("Oregon/Pink-sided") Junco** complex with a leaning toward "Oregon". It was interesting to follow the discussion both from the standpoint of learning of the difficulties in identification within some groups of species and subspecies and to see the varied approaches of participants to such discussions. The blackbird family was most notable for a lack of interesting winter records and only limited numbers returning by season's end.

The winter finch picture was pretty much hit and miss this winter. There were no substantial numbers other than several reports of hundreds of Common Redpolls in late January and early February, but all the winter finch species were at least reported. Evening Grosbeak was the least substantiated, with the only reports being a few Project Feederwatch birds with no way to follow up.

Species totals for all three months were above the 10-year averages: December - 135 (125.5), January – 131 (130.2), and February – 127 (108.4). The species total for the season was 153.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, T Greece, MONR; CFH – Caledonia Fish Hatchery, LIVI; CHCBC – Conesus-Hemlock CBC; CL – Conesus Lake, LIVI; G – T Greece, MONR; H – T Hamlin, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach SP, MONR; IB – Irondequoit Bay, MONR; K – T Kendall, ORLE; LSLCBC – Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC on 17 Dec; NMWC – Northern Montezuma Wetlands Complex, T Savannah, WAYN; PB – Point Breeze, T Carlton, ORLE; RCBC – Rochester Christmas Bird Count; S – T Savannah, WAYN; SB – Sodus Bay, WAYN; SP – Sodus Pt, WAYN; TPP – Turning Point Park, Rochester, MONR; TWS – Groveland Flats, T West Sparta LIVI; WP – Webster Park, MONR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: 2 Elba 21 Jan (KF).

Snow Goose: Dec max 240 T Leicester LIVI 26 Dec; max 5,000 S 9 Jan (W&MR); 4700 T Carlton 28 Feb (DT).

Cackling Goose: 22 rep of approx 45 individuals, some duplication possible.

Canada Goose: max 10,000 Twin Cedars Environmental Area 4 Dec (MW).

Mute Swan: max 169 RCBC 18 Dec.

Trumpeter Swan: max 21 S 11 Dec (SBi,JMc,NS,BraW).

Tundra Swan: max 305 CL 24 Dec (KF); 250 S Dec (SBi,JMc,NS,BraW).

Wood Duck: 3 CHCBC 26 Dec, count record high; 1 CFH 3 Jan (DT); 1 Penfield 5 Feb (KH); few wintering.

Gadwall: max 114 RCBC 18 Dec; 12 LSLCBC 17 Dec, count record high; arr 2 G 15 Feb (GL).

Am. Wigeon: 1 CL 15 Jan (DT, KF); 74 NMWC 10 Feb (IBA Monitoring); max 78 NMWC 29 Feb (DT)), many for the date.

Am. Black Duck: max 385 S 3 Feb (DT).

Mallard: max 2800 S 3 Feb (DT).

N. Shoveler: max 19 G 3, 18 Dec (DT, R&SSp,CSp); arr 2 S 29 Feb.

N. Pintail: max 1421 NMWC 28 Feb (IBA Monitoring).

Green-winged Teal: Dec max 68 S 5 Dec; 1-2 sev thru 8 Feb; arr 14 NMWC 28 Feb.

Canvasback: max 67 BB 20 Feb, low.

Redhead: 4000 CL 24 Dec (KF); max est 12,000 CL 27 Jan (MW), included 1 leucistic ind; 5700 CL 16 Feb (MW); very high counts.

Ring-necked Duck: max 600+ Hemlock L 1 Jan (R&SSp,CSp).

Greater Scaup: 1500 SP 10 Jan (MT); max 2300 SP 10 Feb (DT); numbers generally low again this winter.

Lesser Scaup: 75 CHCBC 17 Dec, count record high; max 500 CL 24 Dec, low max.

King Eider: 3 f HB 1Dec (DS, RSp); 1-3 off Irondequoit 18-26 Dec (mob); 2 f PB ORLE 27 DEC (CW); 1 f PB 22 Jan thru (mob); 1 f mouth of Genesee River 14 Feb thru (GL, mob).

Harlequin Duck: 1 f IB 18-22 Dec (GC, mob); 2 imm m WP 18-20 Dec (AGu, mob); 1 imm m G 27 Feb (DT).

Long-tailed Duck: max 2600 off E Manitou Rd Greece 2 Jan (DT).

Bufflehead: max 497 CHCBC 26 Dec, count record high.

Com. Goldeneye: 100 LSLCBC 17 Dec, count record high.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 m PB 25 Dec-6 Feb (A&RGu, mob); 1 m SP 17-31 Jan (DW, JTa, mob)

Barrow's x Com. Goldeneye: 1 m PB 17 Jan (DW,JTa).

Hooded Merganser: max 464 RCBC 18 Dec, count record high; 343 CHCBC 26 Dec, high.

Ruddy Duck: max 42 Silver Lake 17 Dec (KF), high for winter; arr 1 BB 17 Feb (KG).

Red-throated Loon: max 96 HB 1 Dec, low max; 12 HB 9 Feb, low winter max.

PACIFIC LOON: 1 HB 9 February (DT), rare in Reg especially in winter.

Pied-billed Grebe: 2 Chimney Bluffs 10 Jan (DD); CL 15 Jan (KF); IB 21 Feb (RSp).

Horned Grebe: max 139 off County Line-Bear Creek WAYN 16 Jan (RSp, JBoe,TSm).

Red-necked Grebe: max 349 West Lakeshore 3 Dec (AB, RSp), good late fall count.

Double-crested Cormorant: max 21 IB 22 Dec, good winter count.

AM. WHITE PELICAN: 1 Fairport MONR 3 Dec (BY, ph), likely bird moving east from Canada over previous month.

Great Blue Heron: max 46 RCBC 18 Dec.

BLACK VULTURE: T Parma 10 Dec (DT); T Leroy GENE 2 Jan (DT); T Riga MONR 30 Dec, 3 Jan, 2-11 Feb (DT, BCar), 4th & 5th winter records, assuming the Riga and Leroy records are the same bird.

Turkey Vulture: max 74-81 T Riga MONR (DT), record high Reg winter count.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: Penfield MONR 8 Jan (RB,SW); TPP Rochester 20 Jan (DT); Webster 21 Jan (FM); 1ad WP 22 Jan (R&SSp); only winter reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: G 11 Dec (CW); Penfield 24 Dec (CR); Springwater LIVI 8 Jan (DT,KF); T Rose WAYN 6 Feb (DT,GL).

Red-tailed Hawk: 1 retrapped near Avon 11 Dec (DM,DG), originally banded near same place 3 Mar 2000, *intro*.

Golden Eagle: Hamlin & Greece 11 Dec (DT, JeB), rare in winter.

Merlin: total 5 all Dec; total 5 all Jan; total 16 all Feb.

Peregrine Falcon: total 2 all Dec; total 0 all Jan; total 6 all Feb.

KING RAIL: S 5 Dec (DT).

Virginia Rail: none.

Am. Coot: 275 LSLCBC 17 Dec, count record high; max 515 CL 24 Dec.

Killdeer: max 10 Maxwell Creek WAYN 9 Dec (DT), very high winter count; arr 1 H 27 Feb.

Sanderling: 1 SP 11, 13 Dec (SBi,JMc,NS,BraW,mob), rare in Reg in winter.

Purple Sandpiper: IB Outlet 2-4 Dec; 2 SP 10 Dec; 7 SP 11 Dec (SBi,JMc,NS,BraW,mob), Reg record high at the time; 9 SP 12-13 Dec (DT,DSh,MT), Reg record high count; 2 BB-ES 14 Dec; 1 Genesee River Mouth piers 20-22 Feb (GL, mob), Reg record late. **Dunlin:** 1 SP 11-13 Dec (SBi,JMc,NS,BraW,mob), rare in Reg in winter.

Wilson's Snipe: 4, 5 Maxwell Creek WAYN 5, 9 Dec (DT); Nations Rd LIVI 12 Jan (DD); scarce in winter.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: HBSP 11 Dec (CW); HB 5 Jan (DT), late.

Herring Gull: max 2700 Riga Landfill 2 Feb (DT), high count.

Iceland Gull: CL 24 Dec (KF), 1st LIVI record, continued to CHCBC 26 Dec; 14 other rep.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 21 rep for season; max 4 T Leroy GENE 2 Jan (DT).

Glaucous Gull: CL 24 Dec (KF), 3rd LIVI record.

Parasitic Jaeger: off Irondequoit 18 Dec (MT, JC); off Greece 2 Jan (DT,G); rare in winter.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Rock Pigeon: max 572 TWS 22 Jan (DT), high for a single location count.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: 8 rep of 2-5 H 15-28 Jan, 4. 13 Feb (sev), sightings more sporadic this winter.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO: Brighton 19 Dec (ST). Reg record late.

E. Screech-Owl: max 73 RCBC 18 Dec, good count.

Snowy Owl: at least 22 scattered about the Reg thru; 6 banded in Region thru (TM).

Barred Owl: approx 10 rep of 17 birds sev sites thru, good numbers; 12 at 6 sites LIVI & ONTA 8 Jan (KF, DT), show numbers possible if observers work at finding owls.

Long-eared Owl: 2-3 Bergen Swamp 1 Jan (DT, GL, JPo), usual location for starting year list, only rep.

Short-eared Owl: 4-7 Church Rd T Hamlin 15 Jan thru (mob).

N. Saw-whet Owl: 1-2 Bergen Swamp 1 Jan (DT, GL, JPo), usual location for starting year list, only rep.

Red-headed Woodpecker: T Byron GENE 18 Jan, 2 Feb; HB 31 Jan, few winter rep.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: total 8 rep of 10 birds for season, excellent winter total.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: none.

N. Shrike: total about 54 for season, excellent total.

Am. Crow: max **33,449** RCBC 18 Dec, new record high; subsequently steps were taken to haze birds away from the downtown Rochester roost, *intro*.

FISH CROW: birds were back in the Charlotte of Rochester area for this winter; max 16 Rochester (Charlotte) 4 Jan, 7 Feb (DT). **Com. Raven:** max 6 Nunda LIVI 5 Feb (DT).

Brown Creeper: approx 27 rep of 54 ind, good total for winter.

Winter Wren: 4 Seneca P & 3 TPP 28 Feb (DT), parks across the Genesee River from one another; approx 25 other rep of 17 individuals.

Marsh Wren: 4 S 5 Dec (DT), high for winter; 1 T Richmond ONTA 26 Dec (D&DT); 2 Seneca Park 28 Feb (DT), survivors.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: none.

Hermit Thrush: approx 13 rep of 21 birds, good count though seemed scarce.

Am Robin: max 3200 K 10 Feb (DT), good count for winter.

Gray Catbird: 6 Dec rep, max 8 HB 14 Dec (DT), many for so late, but none after Dec.

Brown Thrasher: TPP 20 Jan (DT).

Am. Pipit: 23 TWS 21 Jan (DT), some video taped; **26** TWS 22 Jan (DT, KF), Reg record high winter count; 7 continuing to 5 Feb.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: max 175 K 29 Jan (BCar), low max indicative of open winter.

Com. Yellowthroat: S 18 Dec; Hemlock Lake 18 Dec; TPP 31 Dec-1 Jan; Mendon Ponds P 26-27 Feb.
Pine Warbler: 1-5 HB campground area 3-31 Dec, 1-11 Jan, 1-4 Feb (DT, *et al*); TPP 1 Jan (GL); Webster 10 Dec (JBoe,NP).
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max **23** CFH 23 Dec (DT), 3-11 still present 3-16 Jan (DT); Oatka Creek P 28 Feb (JAd).
Wilson's Warbler: Durand-Eastman P 18-22 Dec (GC, MT, DT, JC), ties State record late.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 5 rep sev loc 1 Dec-1 Jan.
Am. Tree Sparrow: 110 Clarendon 18 Jan; max 231 RCBC, low this winter.
Chipping Sparrow: H 3 Dec (KG); LSLCBC 17 Dec; Beatty Pt Greece 18 Dec (GL)
Field Sparrow: 8rep sev loc thru 2 Feb.
LARK SPARROW: 1 K 29 Jan thru (DT, mob), 5th Reg record, at feeders.
Savannah Sparrow: 11 TWS 21 Jan (DT), some video taped; max 18 TWS 22 Jan (DT, KF), ; 7 K & T Carlton ORLE 21 Jan (AG); 4 other rep 1-5 sev loc 15 Jan – 2 Feb (DT, sev).
FOX SPARROW: 2 WP 13 Dec (BCar), only report.
White-crowned Sparrow: max 13 Cuylerville LIVI 3 Jan.
Dark-eyed (likely Oregon) Junco: 1 N Wolcott 13 Jan (W&MR, ph), topic of ID discussion groups, *intro*.
E. Meadowlark: none.
Rusty Blackbird: max 26 T Perry WYOM 26 Dec (DT).
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 1000 Nations Rd, Avon 2 Dec (MW); 183 Honeoye Falls 14 Jan (BCar).
Purple Finch: max 23 Rattlesnake Hill WMA LIVI 8 Jan.
Pine Grosbeak: 1 Hogan Pt, Greece 19 Dec (DT), only rep.
Red Crossbill: Durand-Eastman P 12 Dec; HB 31 Dec; HB 2 Feb.
White-winged Crossbill: 9 rep of 1-15 ind sev loc 3 Dec – 10 Feb; max 43 HB 3 Dec (DT).
Com. Redpoll: 1-2 HB & Maxwell Creek 12-31 Dec; 150 HB 31 Jan (KH); 250-380 HB 1-10 Feb (DT, *et al*).
Hoary Redpoll: 2 HB 1 Jan (DT).
Pine Siskin: max 16 MP 25 Jan, low.
Evening Grosbeak: Project Feederwatch tallied 3 in Dec & 8 in Jan, *intro*.

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REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

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A mere 20 inches of snow fell during the entire reporting period in Ithaca. This total amounted to less than half of the historical average and less than one-third of the total for the equivalent timeframe of 2010-2011. Throughout the period, there was essentially no snow cover except at higher elevations. Temperatures were also unusually mild. Average temperatures in December, January, and February all exceeded historical monthly norms by more than five degrees Fahrenheit. Whether the anomalous weather affected bird movements or increased birder effort or for whatever other reasons, the season was one of the better winters in recent memory for frequency and magnitude of rarity sightings.

At least three individual birds from the genus *Aechmophorus* appeared on Cayuga Lake at three different locations. Chris Wood and Jessie Barry found the first, a **Western Grebe**, at Myers Park in Lansing on 10 January. Tim Lenz found the second at the south end of Cayuga Lake on 31 January. This bird evidently lingered here through the end of the period. Moreover, astonishingly, on 8 February, Tom Johnson and Jay McGowan found two *Aechmophorus*

together on Cayuga Lake near the Twin Oaks Campground just north of Union Springs. These two birds were noted in this area by multiple observers all the way to 11 February. Notably, on 10 February, Marsha and Fred Kardon reported seeing one definite *Aechmophorus* grebe and possibly a second one at the south end of Cayuga Lake, at nearly the same time as Dave Nicosia, Fritzie Blizzard, and Becky Sewell were observing two *Aechmophorus* together in the Twin Oaks area.

All of these observations involved excellent views that yielded clear photos and detailed notes by multiple birders. Still, it remained impossible to state definitively the identities of the Stewart Park bird and one of the two Twin Oaks grebes. At both sites, the grebe in question showed paler flanks, a slightly brighter bill, and more white in the loral area above the eye than an indisputable Western Grebe. Clark's Grebe could be ruled out because the bill and face in both cases were insufficiently bright, but the possibilities of either a hybrid Western/Clark's Grebe or a pale Western Grebe remain open.

For at least the 13th consecutive winter, an Eared Grebe was regularly seen on Cayuga Lake near Aurora. Suan Yong found the season's most notable duck, a female **King Eider,** at Seneca Lake SP on 2 December.

Turkey Vultures took advantage of the absence of snow, staying in large numbers throughout the winter. Donna Scott saw an impressive single flock of at least 65 Turkey Vultures at an evening roost in Lansing on 10 February. Golden Eagles were observed a remarkable five times during the reporting period, but Red-shouldered Hawks were reported neither to eBird nor to local birding listserves. This absence broke a string of several years in which a Red-shouldered Hawk wintered in Sapsucker Woods. Merlins were observed in downtown Ithaca and Elmira; separately, Peregrine Falcons were seen in these cities and in Corning as well.

The season's indisputable highlight among rare larids was an adult **Black-legged Kittiwake**, found by Jessie Barry, Chris Wood, and Jeff Gerbracht at the south end of Cayuga Lake on 14 January. Chris found a Thayer's Gull at Cornell University's compost facility on 9 December; this bird was found again at the south end of Cayuga Lake by several other birders the next day, and again by Chris in the same area a week later. The usual winter array of other uncommon white-headed winter gulls, including Glaucous, Iceland, and Lesser Black-backed, all appeared in expected numbers at traditional spots, especially Cornell University's compost facility on Stevenson Road in Dryden, as well as Stewart Park in Ithaca.

As in the rest of the northern United States, **Snowy Owls** irrupted in impressive numbers into Region 3. They were seen at no fewer than eight locations by many dozens of delighted birders. Most remarkably, one Snowy Owl was seen from 27 December to 1 January on the parking lot light towers and buildings of Waterloo Premium Outlets, a sprawling shopping mall.

Carol Keeler saw a hummingbird at her feeders in Auburn on 14 December. She was unable to pinpoint this bird's species, and alas, it did not return for a closer look.

The most notable songbird of the winter was an **Orange-crowned Warbler** found by Ken Rosenberg on the Ithaca Christmas Bird Count on 1 January. This was an all-time first for the species for this count. Chris Wood found the season's only Gray Catbird at Monkey Run South in Dryden on 20 January. The next day, he and Jessie Barry found, photographed, and thoroughly described an apparent "Cassiar" Dark-eyed Junco in the same area. Marty Borko and John Palmer recorded a clear observation of a brown-headed chickadee on the Corning Christmas Bird Count on 17 December, but could not confirm other field marks that might clinch an identification of Boreal Chickadee.

It was an unremarkable winter for irruptive songbird species. Carl Steckler found the only Bohemian Waxwing of the season in Summer Hill State Forest on 20 January. Moderate-sized flocks of White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins were seen regularly in Summer Hill State Forest, with scattered sightings of these species elsewhere. Common Redpolls were similarly scattered, appearing in modest numbers. No definitive reports of Hoary Redpoll or Red Crossbill were made. The only three sightings of Evening Grosbeak all occurred in January. Terie Rawn found one in Newfield. Chris Wood and Jessie Barry found two together in Hammond Hill State Forest on 15 January, while Jeff Gerbracht found one two weeks later.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATSMP – Allan Treman State Marine Park, Ithaca; CCBC – Corning Christmas Bird Count; CU – Cornell University; dtCo – downtown Corning; dtElm – downtown Elmira; dtIth – downtown Ithaca; EBSCBC – Eaton Birding Society Christmas Bird Count; ECBC – Elmira Christmas Bird Count; ESP – East Shore Park, Ithaca; GCBC – Geneva Christmas Bird Count; HHSF – Hammond Hill State Forest; ICBC – Ithaca Christmas

Bird Count; KHAMO – Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory, Burdett, SCHU; LPtSP – Long Point State Park; MCBC – Montezuma CBC; MNWR – Montezuma NWR; MRS – Monkey Run Road South (Cornell Plantations), Dryden; Myers – Myers Park, Lansing; SchCBC – Schuyler County CBC; SLSP – Seneca Lake SP; StvR – Stevenson Road, Dryden; SW – Sapsucker Woods; StP – Stewart Park, Ithaca.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 Moravia 17 Dec (JB, CLW); 1 Seneca Lake 4 Feb (W&MR).
Ross's Goose: 1 MNWR 12 Dec (JB, CLW); 1 Atwood Road (CAYU) 17 Dec (JB, CLW); 1 SW 3 Jan (JB, CLW); 1 SW 27 Feb (JM, TS).
Brant: 2 SP 1 Dec (TL); these birds remained at the south end of Cayuga Lake until 17 Dec.
Cackling Goose: max 11 SW 27 Feb (JM); 5 StP 1 Jan (KR on Ithaca CBC).
Tundra Swan: max 2200 Cayuga Lake CAYU 28 Jan (AJ, CLW).
Trumpeter Swan: scattered reports from Cayuga Lake and MNWR thru.
Gadwall: max 200 Cayuga Lake CAYU 7 Jan (SK), high for mid-winter.
Eurasian Wigeon: 1 StP 30 Jan (JT, DW, JGK, AM); 1 Cayuga Lake CAYU 4 Feb (DNu); 1 StP 25 Feb (TL).
N. Shoveler: max 100 MNWR 18 Dec (DNu), very high count for early winter.
N. Pintail: max 1500 MNWR 26 Feb (TL, JM, BW, MS).
Green-winged Teal: max 5 MNWR 18 Dec (DNu).
KING EIDER: 1 SLSP 2 Dec (SY), only report.
Canvasback: max 7000 Cayuga Lake 26 Feb (TL, JM, NSe, MS, BW).
Redhead: max 35000 Cayuga Lake 26 Feb (TL, JM, NSe, MS, BW).
Surf Scoter: max 6 Cayuga Lake CAYU 10 Dec (TL, JM, NSl, BW).
Long-tailed Duck: max 5 Seneca Lake 31 Dec (LL).
Hooded Merganser: max 64 StP 18 Dec (KR), very high for early winter.
Com. Merganser: max 670 Cayuga Lake CAYU 11 Feb (TL, JM, BW).
Red-throated Loon: max 2 ESP, StP, and ATSMP several times starting 20 Dec (TL, BW) thru (DNu).
EARED GREBE: 1 StP 9 Dec (TL, NS, CLW!), 1 Aurora Bay 7 Jan and 5 Feb (SF, DNu, BM, SD), at least 13th consec winter.
WESTERN GREBE: 1 Myers 10 Jan and 26 Feb (CLW, JB, MY, JG, mob!), different individual birds; 1 StP, ESP, and ATSMP 31 Jan thru (TL, BW, JM, mob!); 2 village of Cayuga 8-11 Feb (TJ, JM, JGK, DW, FB, BS, mob!); *intro* for more details on ID.
Turkey Vulture: max 65 Ithaca 10 Feb (DS), very high; common throughout Region and period.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Golden Eagle: 1 Atwood Road CAYU 17 Dec (MY); 1 Caroline TOMP 18 Dec (SKe); 1 MRS 18 Dec (CLW); 1 Ledyard CAYU 29 Jan (TL, MSt, BW); 1 StP 31 Jan (KR, C&RT).
Merlin: 1 dtElm 3 Dec (BO); 1 StvR 30 Dec (LS); 1 dtIth 27 Jan (BE).
Peregrine Falcon: max 2 StP 19 Jan (TL, BW); 1 dtElm 3 Dec (BO); 1 Canandaigua 28 Dec (JA); 1 dtElm 21 Jan (MP); 1 dtCo 27 Feb (DS); regular other reports from StP thru.
Sandhill Crane: max 19 MNWR 3 Dec (TL); 4 MNWR 31 Jan thru (DNu, DK), rare in mid-winter.
Killdeer: max 5 Dryden 24 Feb (KM, JM); 1 SLSP 31 Dec (LJ, JA); 1 Aurora 15 Jan (SD, TL, BM); 1 StvR 7 Feb (KM); 1 KHAMO 17 Feb (J&SG), early relative to site's 27-year mean arrival date of 10 Mar.
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: 1 StP and ESP 14 Jan (JB, JG, CLW).
THAYER'S GULL: 1 StvR and ATSMP 9-10 Dec (CLW, BW, LAvL, DNu, mob); 1 ATSMP 17 Dec (CLW).
Iceland Gull: max 3 Cayuga Lake SP 30 Jan (JT, DW); 3 Seneca Falls 2 Jan (TL, SD).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 3 SLSP 6 Feb (KB).
Glaucous Gull: 1 Seneca Falls 26 Jan (DK); 1 SP 14 Jan and 31 Jan (JGK, DNu, JM, SK, BW, TL); 1 ATSMP 19 Feb (TL).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: 1 MNWR 18 Dec (TL); 1 Woolhouse Road (ONTA) 23-24 Dec (F&JB, B&DP, DD, LJ, JPo, DM); 1 Waterloo 27 Dec – 1 Jan (CK, mob!); 1 Jerusalem (YATE) 1 Jan (LD); 1 near Dresden YATE 11 and 25 Jan (VS); 1 Ovid 21 and 24 Jan (MS, MJW, MG, mob!); 1 Seneca Falls 27 Jan – 6 Feb (DNu, CK, mob); 1 Elmira Regional Airport 6 Feb (TM), previously present for "about a month."
Short-eared Owl: max 8 Johnson Road YATE 19 Feb (JA).
N. Saw-whet Owl: 1 SW 26 Jan (WH).
hummingbird sp: 1 Auburn 14 Dec (CK).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: 1 Dryden 24 Dec (MRe); 1 Ithaca 14 Jan (FK).

House Wren: 1 ATSMP 14 Dec (CLW), latest record in eBird for Tompkins County, only report.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 ESP 1 Jan (TL, GS); 1 MRS 1 Jan, 23 Jan (CLW, JM); 1 Lansing 8 Jan, 14 Jan, 6 Feb (JB, LAvL, KM, CLW, JGe).

E. Bluebird: max 26 Union Springs 5 Jan (FB).

Hermit Thrush: max 5 ICBC 1 Jan.

Gray Catbird: 1 MRS 20 Jan (CLW), only report.

Am. Pipit: max 16 Cayuga Lake 11 Feb (TL, JM, BW); sev rep from Myers 5 Jan thru (MC, DNi, DNu, JM, CLW, JG); sev StP 19 Jan (JM); 1 Ovid 22 Jan (FB, DNu); unusually frequent mid-winter records.

Bohemian Waxwing: 1 SHSF 20 Jan (CS), only report.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 15 Lansing 14 Jan (JB, CLW, JGe).

Snow Bunting: max 425 Lansing 14 Jan (JB, CLW, JGe).

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: 1 dtIth 1-2 Jan (KR & TL on Ithaca CBC, JB, CLW), first record this CBC.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 8 Aurora 18 Dec (TL, BW); 1 Enfield 4 Jan (BB).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 Brooktondale throughout Dec (MRa); 1 Ithaca 15 Jan, 21-22 Jan, 19 Feb (JH, JB, CLW); 1 Interlaken 5 Feb (MSc, MJW).

Field Sparrow: 1 Dryden 14 Jan (DNu).

Savannah Sparrow: 1 MNWR 15 Jan (SD, TL, BM).

Fox Sparrow: 1 Freeville (TOMP) 22 Jan (CLW), only report.

White-crowned Sparrow: 1 Canoga 15 Jan (SD, TL, BM).

"Cassiar" Dark-eyed Junco: 1 MRS 21 Jan (JB, CLW).

Rusty Blackbird: max 15 Aurora 11 Feb (HB, EG, GM, SM, TP); 1 CCBC 17 Dec.

Com. Grackle: max 1100 SW 27 Feb (JM), unusual early large migrating flocks; various scattered reports throughout mid-winter.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max ~200 StvR 21 Feb (JM); 30+ Union Springs 5 Jan (FB, BS); sev other rep scattered throughout Region thru.

Red Crossbill: 1 Caroline (TOMP) 23 Feb (SKe), only report.

White-winged Crossbill: max 48 SHSF 29 Jan (TL); numerous other reports from SHSF thru; 3 Horseheads 8 Feb (MP).

Com. Redpoll: numerous scattered reports mid-January thru.

Pine Siskin: max 120 SHSF 17 Dec (KR, JGe, TL); numerous other reports from SHSF thru; various other scattered reports of seven or fewer birds.

Evening Grosbeak: max 2 HHSF 15 Jan (JB, CLW); 1 Newfield 11 Jan (TR); 1 HHSF 28 Jan (JG).

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REGION 4—SUSQUEHANNA

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Overall, the winter was a record breaker, with winter never really taking hold; the most unusual winter I can remember. All three months were in the top 10 for warmest, and December and January were in the top 10 for driest months. Collectively, it was the least snowy and the warmest winter on record.

The cone crops were good to great on all conifers except red pine, with hemlock crops being their best since the mid 90s. As a result, Pine Siskins were

nesting in most state forests across the Region. Other winter food crops like fruiting trees and shrubs, maples, ashes, and birches were good as well, with oaks producing average crops.

There were no big surprises during the annual mid winter waterfowl count. In fact, the warm and relatively iceless winter led to a very below average waterfowl count. Five Common Loons seen on the count might have been the best sighting for the survey. On 17 December, the first Saturday of the Christmas Bird count season, a huge goose flight took place, leading to **Greater White-fronted, Cackling,** and large numbers of Canada and **Snow** Geese being reported. Many of the CBCs broke records for Snow Geese.

Merlins continue to overwinter in parts of the Region. Two **Golden Eagles** were seen on the Sherburne Christmas Bird Count and another bird was reported on the Cortland Christmas Bird Count. Both counts were on 17 December. It appears that almost every year now at least 2-3 Golden Eagles are reported on area CBCs. Some birds are clearly migrants, but other birds appear to stop over for a time or to try to overwinter. Bald Eagles are now widespread and reported from across the area.

An **American Woodcock** was seen on 28 January in Richford, and there was a one-day sighting of a Snowy Owl at the Binghamton airport in December. Good songbird finds were the Cortland CBC's first Fish Crow; an overwintering Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Broome County; and Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, and Rusty Blackbird all at Lime Hollow Nature Center. The best find has to be a **Baltimore Oriole** on the Oneonta Christmas Bird Count.

There was a large movement of Pine Siskins with a small scattering of White-winged Crossbills and Red Crossbills into state forests in the area. **Pine Siskins** were starting to nest late February, and Type 1 Red Crossbills could be heard singing in Pharsalia in January. There was a very small push of **Common Redpolls** this year.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BPd – Boland Pd; BCBC – Binghamton Christmas Bird Count; CCBC – Cortland Christmas Bird Count; FMHW – Franklin Mt Hawk Watch; SWC – State Waterfowl Count; OnCBC – Oneonta Christmas Bird Count; OwCBC – Owego Christmas Bird Count: SHCBC – Sherburne Christmas Bird Count; SkanL – Skaneateles L; TBC – Tioga Bird Club; NCBCWW – Naturalists' Club of Broome Co Weed Walkers.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: CCBC CORT 17 Dec; Hillcrest Pits 3 Feb, *intro.*
Snow Goose: max 2448 CCBC 17 Dec; regular early-mid Dec; high numbers reported on all area CBCs; first returning flocks early this year.
CACKLING GOOSE: 2 CCBC 17 Dec, high count and rare.
TUNDRA SWAN: 3 Wildwood Nat Res 29 Feb.
Wood Duck: SWC mid Jan; 4 Tioga Airport 25 Feb.
GADWALL: 1-3 BPd Jan thru.
Am. Wigeon: 1-10 BPd Jan thru.
Am. Black Duck: max 218 SWC mid Jan.
N. Pintail: 1-5 BPd Feb thru; max 38 Wildwood Nature Reserve 24 Feb.
GREEN-WINGED TEAL: 2 CCBC 17 Dec; 1-4 BPd 29 Jan thru.
Canvasback: BROO 21 Jan.
Redhead: BPd 13-14 Jan, only report.
Ring-necked Duck: max 9 SHCBC 17 Dec; very few reports.
Lesser Scaup: Otsiningo Park 22 Jan.
Bufflehead: 84 SWC mid Jan.
Com. Goldeneye: max 53 SkanL CCBC 17 Jan.
Hooded Merganser: max 55 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid Jan.
Com. Merganser: max 492 SWC mid-Jan.
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: 3 SWC mid Jan.
Com. Loon: 5 SWC mid-Jan.
Pied-billed Grebe: River Rd Jan.
Great Blue Heron: just a few rep from most area CBCS; several reps throughout area with typical decline in numbers early Jan-late Feb.
Turkey Vulture: a few early Dec; one OwCBC 31 Dec; one mid winter rep BROO 6 Jan; first returning migrants Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 7 BCBC 17 Dec; rep all area CBCs; larger numbers concentrated in Delaware R basin; rep all counties; now regular in smaller numbers near medium sized rivers including Tio R from E. Homer to Whitney Pt; > 20 different ind at OTSE bait stations (TS).
N. Harrier: 4 OwCBC 31 Dec; few other reports, surprising for such a snowless warm winter.
N. Goshawk: 3 CCBC 17 Dec; on 3 other CBCs.
Red-shouldered Hawk: TIOG 12 Dec, only rep.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 12 CCBC 17 Dec, not a big year.
GOLDEN EAGLE: 17 FMHW 1 Dec; 1 CCBC; 2 SHCBC; 6 at OTSE bait stations; a few seem to stopover or try to overwinter every year now esp. in OTSE and DELA, *intro.*
Am. Kestrel: max 2 CCBC 17 Dec; scarce after Dec; overwintering birds declining for years despite generally warmer winters.
Merlin: Bing Jan thru.
Peregrine Falcon: Binghamton thru, expected.
Am. Coot: max SWC mid Jan; Otsego Lake every winter.
Killdeer: 4 Endwell 29 Feb.
AMERICAN WOODCOCK: Richford 28 Jan (BC), good details, *intro.*

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

SNOWY OWL: Bing airport Dec, only report despite it being a large invasion year elsewhere.
SHORT-EARED OWL: 3 Eiklor Rd TIOG 12 Dec.
N. Saw-whet Owl: OnCBC & CCBC
Belted Kingfisher: max 3 BCBC 17 Dec; sev reps with dip in numbers early Jan-late Feb.
N. Flicker: max 6 CCBC 17 Dec; scarce.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: few reports Dec; generally scarce afterwards.
Blue Jay: max 225 OnCBC 17 Dec.
FISH CROW: BCBC 17 Dec; CCBC 17 Dec,

count first; typical locations near waterways between Binghamton and Owego now to Corttland; max 20 Johnson City 20 Feb.
Com. Raven: CBC & winter numbers continue to increase; max 80+ at Burlington bait site.
Horned Lark: low numbers on CBCs due to lack of snow; max 90 Cornell Ln CORT.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 83 CCBC 17 Dec; good numbers in state forests with good conifer crops.
Brown Creeper: max 10 BCBC 17 Dec; average numbers reported otherwise.
Carolina Wren: max 17 BCBC 17 Dec; continues to increase area wide.
WINTER WREN: BCBC 17 DEC.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 23 CCBC 14 Dec; average numbers reported, but missed from OnCBC.
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: Victory St BROO 19 Feb.
E. Bluebird: max 36 CCBC 217Dec; many reported thru, generally more common in "southern tier" counties.
HERMIT THRUSH: BROO 24 Feb; CCBC Lime Hollow Nature Center 17 Dec.
Am. Robin: max 9 CCBC 14 Dec; very low numbers.
GRAY CATBIRD: CCBC Lime Hollow Nature Center 17 Dec.
N. Mockingbird: max 9 OwCBC 31 Dec; on CCBC and BCBC.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: missed on all CBCs, likely due to lack of snow; max 75 Arnold Rd BROO 22 Jan.

TOWHEES – WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 110 CCBC; ave, down from last year's impressive showing.
FOX SPARROW: Richford TIOG 22 Jan (DM).
Song Sparrow: max 9 BCBC 17 Dec; all area CBC's except SHCBC.
Swamp Sparrow: Wildwood Nature Rescrve 4 Jan; few overwinter in various marshes in Reg every year.
White-throated Sparrow: max 29 CCBC 147Dec; missed on OnCBC and SHCBC.
Red-winged Blackbird: all area CBCs; max 150 OnCBC; migr arr late Feb.
RUSTY BLACKBIRD: 2 CCBC Lime Hollow Nature Center 17 Dec.
Com. Grackle: migr arr late Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 150 SHCBC 17 Dec; commonest winter blackbird; migr arr Mar.
BALTIMORE ORIOLE: OnCBC 17 DEC (SB), *intro.*
Purple Finch: max 59 CCBC 17 Dec; largely scarce but becoming slightly more common and widespread mid-late Jan thru.
Red Crossbill (TYPE 1): Pharsalia CHEN Jan thru; 6 OnCBC 17 Dec.
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: 3 Pharsalia 7 Jan thru.
Com. Redpoll: 5 CCBC & 33 OnCBC 17 Dec; very small flight.
Pine Siskin: max 201 CCBC 17 Dec; reported from most state forests with conifers; breeding behaviors began in earnest mid-late Feb, *intro.*
Am. Goldfinch: max 255 CCBC 17 Dec; ave numbers thru.

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REGION 5—ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The season was very warm, with just two days when the low in Syracuse went below 0° F and only 11 days when the high failed to reach 32° F. There was a scant 43" of snow for the season, and often little or no snow on the ground at lower elevations. Oneida Lake didn't freeze until 15 January, and the eastern half was opening up by 28 February. Onondaga Lake was frozen for about ten days. In the Adirondacks, Big Moose and Fourth Lakes froze on 29 December. In December the average temperature at the Syracuse Airport was 35.9°, 6.5° above normal, with 2.48" of precipitation, 0.74" below normal. The average

temperature for January was 31.1°, 7.5° above normal, with 3.88" of precipitation, 1.38" above normal. In February the temperature averaged 32.3°, 6.4° above normal, and there was 1.41" of precipitation, 0.66" below normal.

The mild winter greatly affected bird distribution over the season. Less common winter waterfowl lingered into and through the winter, while some expected waterfowl were reported in much smaller numbers since the weather did not concentrate them in smaller, open areas. Half-hardy species were seen in very good numbers, but Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings had the run of snowless fields and were not concentrated at manure spreads. The major "fall" goose migration occurred on 17 December after a cold front. It was well reported as it coincided with the first Saturday of the Christmas Bird Count season. Snow Geese barely left the area for the winter. Large numbers of Tundra Swans also remained on Oneida Lake until the mid January freeze-up, with about 60 Tundra Swans wintering on the open water at Brewerton. Greater White-fronted Goose and Brant lingered into December, and several Cackling Geese were reported.

Northern Shoveler stayed into December, and a few Northern Pintail and American Wigeon likely wintered. Numbers of Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoters, and Long-tailed Ducks were low, likely because the lack of ice on Lake Ontario allowed waterfowl to spread over the lake or even remain farther north. After a year's absence, Lesser Scaup again staged in large numbers at the eastern end of Oneida Lake. Grebe and loon numbers were low. Great Blue Herons were scarce, again quite possibly spread about on the edges of all of the open water this year. A **Great Cormorant** was seen passing Derby Hill after a December cold front. Wild Turkeys were able to feed in the woods instead of coming to manure spreads in open fields.

Overall, there was a good variety of raptors this season. Turkey Vulture reports were from expected areas, one late Osprey passed by in December, and two Red-shouldered Hawks were reported. There were no Rough-legged Hawk concentrations this season. We had four Golden Eagles reported away from Derby Hill, and Dave Wheeler reported a gray **Gyrfalcon** flying by Oswego Harbor and harassing geese and gulls. Spring Red-tailed Hawk migration was underway by 21 February.

American Coot wintered in larger than normal numbers at Skaneateles Lake, Onondaga Lake, and Oswego Harbor. Twenty Sandhill Cranes flew southwest past Derby Hill; this was the second consecutive year that a large number have been seen in December coming from somewhere to our north. Purple Sandpiper was the only shorebird reported until Killdeer and American Woodcock arrived at the end of February.

Single **Black-legged Kittiwakes** were observed at Derby Hill in December and January. Bonaparte's Gulls remained on Oneida Lake into January. With no ice shelves forming above dams on the Seneca and Oswego Rivers, gulls had no roost spots, so the Madison County landfill was the best spot for gulls even after Oneida Lake froze in January. As many as eight Iceland Gulls and three Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found there, while Glaucous Gull was scarcer with

only singles seen at any location. A mid-December **Pomarine Jaeger** was later than most years but always a candidate following a December cold front.

It was a good Snowy Owl year nationwide, but there were not many in our area except for the three Snowy Owls at the Syracuse Airport. A **Barn Owl** was heard calling on one occasion but was not heard again despite repeated checking. Beaver Lake Nature Center hosted a one-day Long-eared Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl that was seen through most of the season. Two Short-eared Owls at Derby Hill were the only ones reported. N. Flickers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers wintered in higher than usual numbers, and a Red-headed Woodpecker at a feeder in Old Forge was far from normal wintering areas.

Half-hardy species were numerous this year, with multiple sightings of Winter Wren, Gray Catbird, White-crowned Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, and Rusty Blackbird plus Hermit Thrush, Field Sparrow, and Fox Sparrows. An injured Chipping Sparrow seemed to be the only species forced to remain in the area. American Pipit was an early arrival at Derby Hill, while Horned Lark and Snow Buntings were scarce as mentioned above.

Bohemian Waxwings put in a brief appearance over a few days in January. Paul Richardson found a **Yellow-throated Warbler** under the railroad bridge where Onondaga Creek flows into Onondaga Lake; the bird remained for several days. Subsequent observers also found a Yellow-rumped Warbler and a **Yellow Warbler**, a species even more unusual than the Yellow-throated Warbler in December.

Red-winged Blackbirds may not have left the area, but they and Common Grackles were moving in by 24 February. There were lots of Purple Finches this winter, while Pine Siskins briefly mobbed feeders in December then dropped to small numbers found in most areas with hemlocks through the season. Common Redpolls numbers were expected to be low this winter, and there was only one large flock plus a few birds at feeders. Crossbills were disappointing in a year with a good cone crop. They presumably found good cone crops elsewhere and did not have to travel this far. No Pine Grosbeaks or Evening Grosbeaks were reported.

For the season a total of 140 species was seen, about 14 more than the recent 10-year average. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Great Cormorant, Osprey, Golden Eagle, **Gyrfalcon**, Sandhill Crane, Purple Sandpiper, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, **Pomarine Jaeger**, **Barn Owl**, Bohemian Waxwing, **Yellow Warbler**, **Yellow-throated Warbler**, Fox Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Adks – Adirondacks; BLNC – Beaver Lake Nature Center, T. Lysander; DH – Derby Hill; FH – Fair Haven; Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; GLSP – Green Lakes SP; HI – Howland Island WMA; MCL – Madison County landfill, T Lincoln; OneiL – Oneida L; OnonL – Onondaga L; SFNS – Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; SPd – Sandy Pond; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP; SVB – Sylvan and Verona Beach; Syr – Syracuse; TR – Three Rivers WMA; WM – West Monroe; WPd – Woodman Pd, Hamilton.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: SVB 26 Dec (DW).
Snow Goose: max 7000 DH 11 Dec; 2338 Syr 17 Dec; 5000 Mexico 2 Feb.
Brant: 2 SVB 5 Dec (BB).
Cackling Goose: DH 16 Dec; Syr 17 Dec; HI 6 Jan.
Canada Goose: max 60,900 Syr 17 Dec, huge migration.
Mute Swan: max 42 FH 15 Feb.
Tundra Swan: max 372 Constantia 1 Jan; 60 Brewerton thru after freeze.
Wood Duck: SPd 15 Dec; Pulaski 30 Jan.
Gadwall: max 13 OnonL 18 Feb.
Am. Wigeon: max 15 WPd 7 Dec; 4 other reports to 5 OnonL 27 Feb.
Am. Black Duck: max 116 Constantia 14 Jan.
N. Shoveler: max 5 FH 13 Dec; last 4 FH 26 Dec.
N. Pintail: winter max 15 DH 16 Dec; spring 56 Skan 29 Feb.
Green-winged Teal: 3 FH 13 Dec; OnonL 31 Jan.
Canvasback: max 37 OnonL 18 Feb.
Redhead: max 315 OnonL 18 Feb.
Ring-necked Duck: max 173 Tully 10 Dec; 60 OnonL 27 Feb.
Greater Scaup: max 121 Skan 14 Dec.
Lesser Scaup: max 5000 OneiL 5 Dec.
King Eider: DH to 16 Dec.
Surf Scoter: max 4 SVB 5 Dec.
White-winged Scoter: max 53 DH 8 Dec.
Black Scoter: max 5 SVB 26 Dec.
Long-tailed Duck: max 337 DH 16 Dec.
Bufflehead: max 65 Mexico Pt 8 Feb.
Com. Goldeneye: max 278 South Bay OneiL 1 Jan.
Hooded Merganser: max 160 Otisco L 12 Dec; 52 Old Forge 17 Dec, late for Adks.
Com. Merganser: max 1370 OnonL 18 Feb.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 4200 FH 10 Dec.
Ruddy Duck: max 36 Otisco L 31 Dec.
Wild Turkey: low numbers in open winter
Red-throated Loon: 5 Dec reports; max 3 Oswego 7 Jan.
Com. Loon: max 15 North Bay 5 Dec.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 4 OnonL 31 Jan.
Horned Grebe: max 17 WPd 7 Dec; 11 Oswego 7 Jan.
Red-necked Grebe: 3 reports, last Oswego 18 Jan.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 25 Syr 10 Dec.
Great Cormorant: DH 8 Dec (DW).
Great Blue Heron: max 3 HI 6 Jan.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Turkey Vulture: max 6 Fayetteville 5 Dec; singles thru.
Osprey: DH 3 Dec (BP), late.
Bald Eagle: to 18/day Redfield Jan-Feb; 12 SPd Jan; 9 Forestport 27 Feb.
N. Harrier: 9 Jan singles; arr 2 DH 21 Feb.
N. Goshawk: 2 Jan & 2 Feb reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 winter reports; arr DH 25 Feb.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 38 DH 22 Feb.
Rough-legged Hawk: 6 Dec reports; singles most areas in Jan, Feb.
Golden Eagle: WM 18 Dec; Camden 18 Dec; Erieville 17 Feb; Pompey 18 Feb; DH 27 Feb.
Am. Kestrel: max 5 Mexico thru.
Merlin: 6 reports.
GYRFALCON: Oswego 18 Jan (DW, NYSARC).
Peregrine Falcon: reports from 5 sites.
Am. Coot: max 105 Skan 1 Jan.
Sandhill Crane: 20 DH 12 Dec (BP); 2 Williamstown 29 Feb (PC).
Killdeer: arr Fabius & Tully 27 Feb.

Purple Sandpiper: max 3 FH thru 10 Dec; last 2 FH 20 Dec.
Am. Woodcock: arr Mexico 23 Feb (WF).
Black-legged Kittiwake: DH 16 Dec, 8 Jan.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 70 OneiL 10 Dec; last 4 OneiL 11 Jan.
Iceland Gull: to 8 per day MCL Jan-Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 4 OnonL 11 Feb.
Glaucous Gull: max 2-3 per day MCL after 24 Jan.
POMARINE JAEGER: DH 16 Dec (BP, KB).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

BARN OWL: Williamstown 8 Dec, calling at night (FB).
Snowy Owl: 4 Dec sites; max 3 Syr Airport Jan-Feb.
Long-eared Owl: BLNC 21 Jan.
Short-eared Owl: 2 DH to last 4 Jan.
N. Saw-whet Owl: BLNC thru; 2 calling Waterville 29 Feb.
Red-headed Woodpecker: Old Forge 27 Feb (CB, ph), surprising location.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: Old Forge 26 Jan thru.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 5 reports.
Black-backed Woodpecker: 4 sites Old Forge area.
N. Flicker: max 11 WM 31 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: about 10 reports per month.
Fish Crow: max 10 OnonL 31 Jan.
Com. Raven: Solvay 2 Jan; expected in rural areas.
Horned Lark: max 60 DH 21 Feb.
Winter Wren: Big Moose 24 Dec; HI 6 Jan; Dewitt 17 Feb.
Hermit Thrush: last Oswego 7 Jan.
Am. Robin: max 230 Skan 14 Jan.
Gray Catbird: max 3 Dewitt 13 Dec; Constantia 1 Jan; Dewitt 25 Jan; Elbridge 14 Feb.
Am. Pipit: arr DH 20 Feb.
Bohemian Waxwing: 2 TR 26 Jan; max 25 SSSP 29 Jan.
Cedar Waxwing: max 75 TR 26 Jan.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Pulaski 15 Jan; GLSP 16 Jan.
Snow Bunting: max 250 Pulaski 29 Jan.
YELLOW WARBLER: Syr 3-5 Dec (DW, mob).
Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 13 Rice Creek 18 Dec; 8 sites Jan.
YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: Syr 1-5 Dec (PR, mob).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: DH 17 Dec (WF); SFNS 25-28 Jan (MP).
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 50/day SFNS in Feb.
Chipping Sparrow: Fulton 18 Dec (BP), injured wing.
Field Sparrow: SFNS 15 Dec (MP).
Fox Sparrow: GLSP to 16 Jan.
Song Sparrow: max 5 Clay 17 Dec.
Swamp Sparrow: last HI 6 Jan.
White-throated Sparrow: max 16 Dewitt 31 Dec.
White-crowned Sparrow: 2 Westmoreland 17 Dec; DH 22 Dec & Sterling 28 Jan; 2 DH after 2 Feb.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 72 North Bay 14 Jan.
Red-winged Blackbird: 68 Skan 1 Dec, widespread; 16 Syr 28 Dec; 110 DH 11 Jan; returning birds 25 Feb.
Rusty Blackbird: 2 SVB 1 Jan; Van Buren 14 Feb.
Com. Grackle: 18 Skan 1 Dec; 70 Skan 25 Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 40 Oneida 1 Jan.
Purple Finch: max 16 Forestport 11 Dec.
Red Crossbill: 2 Big Moose 15 Feb.
White-winged Crossbill: max 12 SFNS 9 Dec; 3 Georgetown 7 Jan; Old Forge 15 Feb.
Com. Redpoll: max 40 SSSP after 5 Feb.
Pine Siskin: max 90 Williamstown 30 Dec; widespread in small numbers at hemlocks.
Am. Goldfinch: max 150 Williamstown 25 Feb.

CORRIGENDA 61(3)

E. Kingbird: arr is 26 Apr, not 26 May.
Prairie Warbler: delete "1 Apr; max 7 per day LOL."

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REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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It was an exceptionally warm winter, with all three months averaging warmer than normal. December was the coolest month relative to average in Watertown, where the mean temperature of 30.1° F was 3.9° above normal. Monthly departures from normal increased through the winter, as January's mean temperature of 25.2° was 6.7° warmer than normal, and February's mean of 28.6° was 7.4° above normal. Total precipitation for the winter was slightly above average but not evenly distributed through the season. Precipitation was almost exactly normal for December, 2.2" above normal for January, and 0.7" below normal for February. Much of this precipitation fell as rain, and Watertown had just 41.6" of snow for the winter, about 40% of normal, and most of this snow melted soon after it fell.

The mild weather clearly affected birds in the Region. Half-hardies were plentiful, including several species that rarely occur in Region 6 during the winter, and mild conditions apparently allowed many of these birds to successfully over-winter. Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River also remained open for the entire winter, including many areas that usually ice over completely by mid-January. Open water on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River in Jefferson County allowed for the presence of many more waterfowl and water birds than are usually reported during winter, but farther downriver in St. Lawrence County duck numbers seemed much lower than usual. Perhaps ducks were present in typical number on the river but were never forced to congregate because the river was open all winter.

The abundance of waterfowl in Jefferson County included nearly every species that regularly occurs in Region 6, many in unusually high numbers and some that are rarely reported in winter. Snow Geese were reported throughout the winter, and it was clear that many December flocks were migrating south and the northbound migration began before the end of February, but it is not at all clear whether mid-winter reports were of late or early migrants or local or Regional wintering birds. Other late fall migrants not frequently reported during winter included Brant and Black Scoter. Unusual species included a mid-winter Cackling Goose on Pt. Peninsula, Northern Shoveler, an excellent three King Eiders, one Harlequin Duck on Lake Ontario, a hybrid Common x Barrow's Goldeneye at Fisher's Landing, and 14 Ruddy Ducks at Kring Point SP. Also noteworthy was a concentration of up to 3,000 Long-tailed Ducks and 465 White-winged Scoters in Lake Ontario off Black Pond WMA that were observed throughout the winter. In a normal year no open water would have been visible from land there after the middle of January.

Common Loons, Horned Grebes, and Double-crested Cormorants were all present in larger than usual numbers. One Red-throated Loon and four Red-necked Grebes were good winter totals for Region 6. Record numbers of

American Coots were reported, including an unprecedented winter gathering of 165 at Millen's Bay on the St. Lawrence River. Several non-birders observed up to five Sandhill Cranes using farm fields in Canton for two weeks in mid-December, but by the time this news got out to the birding community the cranes had departed.

Fairly good numbers of raptors wintered throughout the Region, particularly in traditional farming areas of northwest Jefferson County. It was the best winter for Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks since 2006-07, although numbers of both species were lower than in that particularly good year. Northern Harriers were plentiful in December but mostly departed after early January snow and ice storms, with a handful remaining in Jefferson County and few elsewhere. By late February harriers were already trickling back into Region 6. Bald Eagles continue to increase and are now so widespread and plentiful as to hardly warrant comment from observers, it seems. Merlin also shows continued increases, with double-digit reports this winter. The raptor highlight of the season was a dark morph **Gyrfalcon** that Gerry Smith was fortunate to see as it flew south past Montario Point on 1 February.

Both Snowy and Short-eared Owls were present in decent numbers throughout the winter. The Snowy Owl incursion was relatively modest by historic standards, but better than most recent years. The great majority of Snowy Owl reports were from areas along the immediate Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shorelines, but these areas certainly received better coverage from birders than most inland agricultural areas. Short-eared Owl numbers at traditional roosts in Cape Vincent and Pt. Peninsula were relatively modest, but this species was also more widespread than usual in Jefferson County, with reports of one to three individuals at many locations.

The mild weather resulted in the presence of excellent numbers and diversity of half-hardies, many of which apparently survived the winter. Species such as American Robin, Eastern Bluebird, and Red-winged Blackbird are reported most winters in Region 6, but were more abundant than usual this year. Notable seasonal rarities included Wilson's Snipe, Red-headed Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Rusty Blackbird. Two examples illustrate just how exceptional this winter was. The Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count tallied 1,609 American Robins, including 660 on the New York side of the circle, compared with a previous record high count of 129 for the entire circle. Even more unprecedented was the presence of scores of Yellow-rumped Warblers in red cedar woodlands on and near Stony Point in Henderson throughout the winter. Region 6 *Kingbird* reports dating back to the 1950s document fewer than ten winter records of Yellow-rumped Warblers for Region 6, nearly all consisting of single individuals. In contrast to the abundance of half-hardies, wintering open-country songbirds were generally scarce. Although a few sizeable flocks of Snow Buntings were reported, overall numbers were well below most years. Horned Larks were even scarcer, and Lapland Longspurs were very hard to find, even in portions of Jefferson County where they are

regular. Conversely, Northern Shrikes were present in typical numbers in most areas.

As often happens, a few novice birders observed bluebirds, robins, or blackbirds in February or even late January and announced that spring migration had started, but these species were present all winter and thus probably not early migrants. However, a few observations from 10-11 February were perplexing and might reflect an early movement of migrants. These reports included a Turkey Vulture Matt Medler saw on 10 February, an American Woodcock that flew in front of Eugene Nichol's car that same morning, and two Rusty Blackbirds I saw for the first time on 11 February in a swamp I had birded all winter. These observations suggest the possibility of an extremely early arrival of a few individuals, but this was such a bizarre winter that it wouldn't be too surprising if these birds had overwintered.

The 123 species reported this winter is the highest tally in recent years, and perhaps is a record, although previous Regional editors did not always document such statistics. By comparison, an average of 100.3 species was reported during the past six years, with a range of 90-112. The presence and abundance of many species rarely observed during the winter is certainly the highlight of the season. The relative bird bonanza presented to birders this winter makes it hard to come up with any real disappointments. The Gyrfalcon could have stuck around for more than one person to see and the Snowy Owl invasion was more modest than it could have been, but it's hard to complain about what was best winter for birding of any year that I've lived in Region 6.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BI – Barnhart Is, T Massena; BPWMA – Black Pd WMA, T Ellisburg; BRB – Black Ri Bay; CBy – Chaumont Bay; CCSP – Coles Creek SP, T Waddington; CPSP – Cedar Pt SP; CV – T Cape Vincent; ED – El Dorado Shores Pres, T Ellisburg; FD – Fort Drum Military Res; FL – Fisher's Landing, T Alexandria; HH – Henderson Harbor; KC – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; KPSP – Kring Point SP; LRUD – Low's Ridge-Upper Dam Trail; MB – Millen's Bay; MCCBC – Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count; MP – Montario Point, T Ellisburg; PilPt – Pillar Point; PRWMA – Perch River WMA; PtPen – Point Peninsula; SH – Sackett's Harbor; SLR – St. Lawrence Ri; SnBa – Snowshoe Bay, T Henderson; StPt – Stony Point, T Henderson; TP – Tibbitt's Point, T Cape Vincent;

ULLWMA – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton; WBSP – Westcott Beach SP; WHWMA – Wilson Hill WMA; WI – Wellesley Is; WP – Whalen Park, T Louisville.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 800 Copenhagen 8 Dec; 3000 SLR Waddington 10 Dec; 180 Hounsfield 20 Dec; 4000+ Watertown 24 Dec; 5000 Adams & Henderson 3 Feb; 350 Henderson 17 Feb; 800 Ellisburg 27 Feb, first obvious northbound migrants.
Brant: last Croil Is. 1 Dec (WS).
Cackling "Richardson's" Goose: PtPen Jan (GS).
Mute Swan: 11 FL 22 Jan; 15 StPt 19 Jan; 8 WI 25 Jan; 15 PRWMA 14 Feb.
Trumpeter Swan: 3 PRWMA 15 Dec; 3 ULLWMA 18 Dec; PtPen 10 Feb.
Tundra Swan: max 400+ BRB 7 Dec; mid-winter max 97 SLR CV to Orleans 18 Jan; many reports smaller numbers JEFF mostly Dec & Jan.
Wood Duck: 2 ULLWMA 11 Dec; WHWMA 14 Dec; f Philadelphia 28 Jan.
Gadwall: max 170 PtPen 10 Feb; many reports 25-160/day SLR & L Ontario shore, high.
Am. Wigeon: max 22 WHWMA 14 Dec; 1-2/day FL Jan & Feb.
Mallard: max 600 CPSP 5 Jan.
Am. Black Duck: numbers low thru.
N. Shoveler: CB 4 Dec, rare in winter.
N. Pintail: 2 WHWMA 3 Dec; 2 WP 10 Dec; ULLWMA 11 Dec; PilPt 11 Dec; 4 PtPen 29 Dec; more than usual.
Green-winged Teal: max 21 Croil Is. 1 Dec; 18 Wilson Hill Island 3 Dec; 2 WP 10 Dec; ULLWMA 11 Dec; 2 WHWMA 14 Dec; 2 CPSP 5 Jan; more than usual.
Canvasback: SLR Lisbon 2 Jan; 20 Millen's Bay 2 Jan; 5 SnBa 7 Jan; 3 SLR CV 18 Jan; Three Mile Bay 26 Feb.
Redhead: max 5000 Millen's Bay CV 1 Jan; 1200 CPSP 5 Jan; 460 FL 10 Feb; smaller numbers SLR & L Ontario thru.
Ring-necked Duck: 290 ULLWMA 9 Dec; 126 MB CV 1 Jan; 75 CPSP 5 Jan; several reports 5-25 thru; more than usual.
Greater Scaup: 650 CPSP 5 Jan; 1900 SnBa 7 Jan; 220 FL 10 Feb; 350 PtPen 10 Feb.
Lesser Scaup: max 20 SLR Massena 4 Dec, SLR Lisbon 2 Jan & PtPen 20 Feb; several reports 1-7/day thru; more than usual.
King Eider: CCSP 3 Dec (JB); MP thru 20 Dec (GS); L Ontario off BPWMA 28 Jan (JB); rarely reported in winter.
Harlequin Duck: ad m PtPen 18 Feb (NL), rare in winter.
Surf Scoter: 12 L Ontario off BPWMA 13 Dec, 3 Feb; CCSP 14 Dec; PtPen 4 Feb.
White-winged Scoter: max 465 L Ontario off BPWMA 3 Feb (JB),high.
Black Scoter: CCSP 10 Dec (JB), only report.
Long-tailed Duck: up to 3000/day L Ontario off BPWMA thru; many reports low 100s L Ontario and S SLR thru (JB).
Bufflehead: max 75 PilPt 7 Jan.
Com. Goldeneye: 550 PilPt 15 Jan; 1099 SLR CV to Orleans 18 Jan; 450 FL 10 Feb; 600 WI 19 Feb; 600+ SH 19 Feb; generally low numbers SLR STLA.
Barrow's Goldeneye: 2m & 1f Pt. Salubrious 30 Dec (EN); ad m CPSP 5 Jan perhaps same as m MB later same day & 18 Jan (JB, NL); f FL 3-10 Feb (JB).
Com. X Barrow's Goldeneye: ad m FL 10 Feb (JB).
Hooded Merganser: max196 WHWMA 3 Dec; mid-winter max 22 FL 31 Jan.
Com. Merganser: max 765 WI 25 Jan.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 360 Millen's Bay 1 Jan; many reports 100+ SLR CV to Orleans thru.
Ruddy Duck: 14 KPSP 2 Dec, rare in winter.
Red-throated Loon: ED 13 Dec, only report.
Com. Loon: 2 PtPen 26 Dec; 2 MB 1 Jan; SnBa 7 Jan; CCSP 16 Jan; 2 SLR CV to Orleans 18 Jan; WI 25 Jan; StPt 28 Jan; 2 PtPen mid-Jan thru; more than usual.
Horned Grebe: 8 PtPen 26 Dec; 9 SnBa 7 Jan; 6 SH 7 Jan; 2 SLR CV to Orleans 18 Jan; 3 StPt 28 Jan; more than usual.
Red-necked Grebe: BI 3 Dec; 2 MB 7 Dec; 2 SH 7 Jan.
Double-crested Cormorant: 7 HH 13 Dec; 7 KPSP 16 Dec; HH 7 Jan; SH 7 Jan; SLR Ogdensburg 16 Jan; MP 21 Feb; more than usual.
Great Blue Heron: PtPen 29 Dec & 15 Jan; Leray 6 Jan; ULLWMA 19 Feb; only reports.
Turkey Vulture: Rutland 10 Feb (MM, early arr or wintering?; next PtPen 17 Feb (CC), record early; Hounsfield 20 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: numerous reports from all areas, including many locations far from water.
N. Harrier: widespread Dec, most departing by early Jan; max 12 PtPen 7 Jan; 1-3/day NW JEFF mid Jan thru.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 6 reports.
Cooper's Hawk: 16 reports.

N. Goshawk: ad FD 22 Dec; imm FD 9 Jan; imm Lisbon 22 Jan; KC 4 Feb; PtPen 21 Feb, apparently migrating; good tally.
Red-tailed Hawk: 15-25/day traditional wintering areas NW JEFF.
Rough-legged Hawk: 15-40/day traditional wintering areas NW JEFF.
Golden Eagle: sub-ad CV 3 Dec & 2 Jan (GS); sub-ad Adams 24 Dec (GS); PilPt 21 Feb (MN).
Am. Kestrel: max 7 CV 20 Dec; scattered reports of apparently successful overwintering birds.
Merlin: 11 reports included at least 3 that successfully overwintered.
Peregrine Falcon: pr Long Sault Dam thru; Ellisburg 22 Jan (BP).
GYRFALCON: dark morph MP 1 Feb (GS).
Am. Coot: 28 PRWMA 15 Dec; ULLWMA 18 Dec; max **165** MB 1 Jan (NL); 1-9/day StPt 7 Jan thru; PtPen 30 Jan.
Sandhill Crane: 3-5/day Canton 2 weeks mid-Dec.
Wilson's Snipe: last CBy 4 Dec (EN).
Am. Woodcock: PtPen 10 Feb (EN), early migrant?
Bonaparte's Gull: 14 KPSP 2 Dec; last 5 CPSP 5 Jan.
Ring-billed Gull: 25-150+/day L. Ontario shoreline and SW end SLR thru; unprecedented mid-winter numbers; typically scarce to absent SLR STLA after early Jan
Iceland Gull: 3 SLR Ogdensburg 11 Dec; WBSP 20 Dec; WBSP 7 Jan; 3 BI 5 Feb; JEFF landfill 29 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: SLR Ogdensburg 16 Jan.
Herring Gull: 1000s moving SLR 11 Dec; mid-winter numbers higher than usual.
Glaucous Gull: FD 12 Dec; WBSP 13 Dec; WBSP 7 Jan; Sparrowhawk Pt. 15 Jan; SLR Massena 16 Jan; 5 BI 5 Feb; JEFF landfill 29 Feb.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: 24+ reports mostly along L Ontario & SLR shorelines.
Short-eared Owl: 15 Lyme & Brownville 29 Dec; max 16 CV mid Jan; many reports 2-5 throughout N JEFF.
Belted Kingfisher: FD 21 Dec; SnBa 7 Jan; 25 CV 7 Jan; Chaumont 7 Jan; Rutland 11 Jan; Deferiet 7 Feb, more than usual.
Red-headed Woodpecker: imm Clayton early Jan thru (GS), rare in winter.
N. Flicker: 30+ reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 1-3/day thru.
Gray Jay: max 5 LRUD 4 Dec.
Blue Jay: max 210 at feeders in 2 adjacent yards New Boston 29 Feb (MT).
Am. Crow: 25,000-30,000 roosting Watertown Dec; dispersed by Jan hazing.
Horned Lark: max 125 Rutland 12 Feb; fewer than most years.
Tufted Titmouse: max 4 Henderson 21 Jan.
Carolina Wren: KC 12 Dec thru; Rensselaer Falls 22 Jan.
Winter Wren: BPWMA 13 Dec (JB); FD 22 Dec (JB); rare in winter.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: many reports.
E. Bluebird: 3-6/day StPt thru; 6 Massena 18 Dec; Canton 2 Jan; 3 PtPen 23 Jan; 3 Chaumont 2 Feb.
Am. Robin: 500-1000+/day StPt thru; 660 NYS side MCCBC 27 Dec; 320 Hammond 22 Jan; many reports smaller numbers lowlands thru.
Bohemian Waxwing: arr Colton & Stockholm 22 Jan (JC); max 325 FD 17 Feb; 300 Ellisburg 28 Feb; widespread flocks 30-150 mostly Feb.
Cedar Waxwing: max 2100 StPt 29 Feb (MT), where numerous smaller flocks thru.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: max 14 PtPen 25 Dec; scarce.
Snow Bunting: max 500 Carthage 17 Feb; apparent SW movement Dekalb & Gouverneur 27 Feb involved many flocks 20-50; numbers modest thru.
Com. Yellowthroat: KC 11 Jan (DB).
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2 BPWMA 13 & 20 Dec; **27** ED 20 Dec; 3 CPSP 5 Jan where 1 still present 26 Feb; **6-40/day** StPt thru; 8 ED 20 Feb; unprecedented numbers in a Region where 1 in winter is noteworthy.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 35-50 in one flock FD 1 Dec.
Savannah Sparrow: CV 15 Jan (GS).
Song Sparrow: 9 reports included at least 2 that successfully overwintered Canton.
Swamp Sparrow: 2 Canton 29 Dec where at least 1 thru.
White-throated Sparrow: 5-6/day KC Jan & Feb; Canton 22 Jan; many fewer than previous winter.
Dark-eyed Junco: widespread 1-3/day thru.
N. Cardinal: max 6-10/day KC thru.
Red-winged Blackbird: WHWMA 3 Dec; WI 8 Jan & 17 Feb; Lisbon 21 Jan; 12 StPt 27 Jan; FD 2 Feb; 3 Canton 14 Feb; more than usual.
E. Meadowlark: MCCBC 27 Dec (T&EW); PtPen 10 Feb (JB); rare in winter.

Rusty Blackbird: 4 FD 1 Dec; 2 Canton 11 Feb where 1 singing 24 Feb (JB).
Com. Grackle: 5 Potsdam 23 Feb (AB), only report.
Brown-headed Cowbird: WCBC 17 Dec; 6 PtPen 29 Jan; 2 CV 10 Feb.

White-winged Crossbill: 23 LRUD 4 Dec; 4 Lisbon 22 Jan; 45 Montague 3 Feb.
Com. Redpoll: Horseshoe L. 4 Dec.
Pine Siskin: Large numbers in Adirondacks thru; generally scarce in lowlands with scattered local concentrations.

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REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The winter of 2011-2012 was quite mild for a North Country winter, with above average temperatures and below average precipitation. December temperatures ranged 5-6° above average, causing lakes and rivers to freeze much later than usual and leaving much of Lake Champlain open throughout the winter. Precipitation was average for the month, but it fell mostly as rain rather than snow. A few inches of snow were recorded in some Adirondack towns on the 23rd and 28th, but no snow was recorded for the month in the Champlain Valley. January was more of the same, with temperatures 4-5° above normal and snowfall well below average. When snow did fall it didn't last, as temperatures rose above freezing throughout the month, the high being 46° in Peru on the 24th. The lowest temperatures of the season came on 15 January, when temperatures fell to -20° in Lake Placid and -10° in Dannemora. To the dismay of skiers across the Region January did not have any significant snowstorms, as the biggest snowfall fell on 29th and brought only 3-6" to the Region. February continued to have temperatures 5-7° above normal, reaching a high temperature of 48° in Peru on the 1st, and a low of -5° in Lake Placid on the 12th. Snowfall totals were 6-12" below average for the month, with the biggest "snowstorm" bringing only 7" in Tupper Lake and 2" in the Champlain Valley on the 25th.

As would be expected, a mild winter led to an above average season for birding. The late onset of winter caused many migrants to linger in the Region well beyond their usual dates. Common Loons were recorded on inland lakes well into December and seen on Lake Champlain throughout the winter. Many species of dabbling ducks were seen well into winter, with record late sightings of a Green-Winged Teal on 14 February and Wood Duck on 4 February in Clinton County. Other notable waterfowl include Red-necked Grebe on 8 January, Northern Pintail on 29 January, and White-winged Scoter and Double-crested Cormorant on 7 February. A Greater-white fronted Goose was found on the Ferrisburgh CBC in a flock of 1,000 Canada Geese, and a lone Cackling Goose was found in Westport. The most popular wintering waterfowl of the season were the three Tundra Swans that were first seen on 22 January at

Ausable Marsh and then reliably sighted through the end of February. These birds became quite the celebrities, drawing the attention of newspapers, television crews, and numerous visitors. While Tundra Swans have been seen at Ausable in the past it is unusual for them to stay for such a period of time. They were a nice treat to have this winter.

The other celebrity of the season was a Snowy Owl that was seen in downtown Plattsburgh in mid-December by multiple observers, though it was not the only owl that would draw the attention of birders this winter. A flock of six Short-eared Owls was discovered in the last hour of CBC desperation on the Ferrisburgh count on Clark Road, one of the roads that make up the famous "Magic Triangle" in Essex County. The owls stayed in the area until at least 20 January and attracted numerous birders to the once famed birding area. The Magic Triangle has lost some of its magic since the water levels dropped in the Webb Royce Swamp, but in the winter this is still one of the best birding locations in the Region. Birders drawn to the owls also found good numbers of Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, and American Tree Sparrows, all species that were hard to find elsewhere in the Region this winter. Other notable owl sightings include a Great-Horned Owl on the Saranac Lake CBC, an Eastern Screech Owl at Point Au Fer, and two N. Saw-whet Owls at Pyramid Lake.

With the mild winter a number of species that usually migrate south were seen in each month of the period, including Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird. A Northern Flicker was sighted in January and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was sighted in early February. A lingering Yellow-rumped Warbler was found on the Plattsburgh CBC, only the second record for this CBC.

An excellent cone crop in the Adirondacks this past year led to very strong invasions of Pine Siskins and White-winged Crossbills in the Adirondacks. Pine Siskins were reported by the hundreds throughout the winter in coniferous forests, their calls filling the otherwise silent woods. White-winged Crossbills were reported from a number places in flocks ranging from two on Hurricane Mt. to 74 in Bloomingdale Bog. Red Crossbills were reported throughout December from the Roosevelt Truck Trail, with a high count of 23 birds on 14 December, but the only other reports all winter was of two birds at Paul Smith's on 14 December and two more at Long Lake on 23 February. Evening Grosbeaks were reported from a number of locations this winter, including a flock of 23 at the Paul Smith's Interpretive Center on 23 January and 35 in Long Lake, also on 23 February.

Most of the northern species that winter in the Adirondacks were reported, though many in smaller numbers than usual. With the lack of snow, Snow Buntings were fairly scarce compared with most winters, with the only sizable report being a flock of 119 in the magic triangle on 14 January. Horned Larks were also scarce, with only two reports all winter, both from Chazy. There were no Lapland Longspurs reported. Bohemian Waxwings arrived in mid-January and were seen in small numbers until mid-February, a much later arrival than in 2010 when they picked through my crabapple tree in early December. Northern

Shrikes were reported as one-day-wonders across the Region, in typical numbers.

In all a total of 100 species was reported this winter, a good number but shy of the record of 109 species.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Point; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CH – Cumberland Head; CR – Chazy Riverlands; FCBC – Ferrisburgh CBC; GBM – Gilbert Brook Marina; IF – Intervale Farm; LC – Lake Champlain; LP – Lake Placid; LL – Long L; MT – Magic Triangle; NYSWC – NYS Waterfowl Count; NP – Noblewood P; PCBC – Plattsburgh CBC; PS – Paul Smiths; PtR – Point Au Roche SP; RP – Rouse's Pt; RTT – Roosevelt Truck Trail; SB – Sabattis Bog; SLCBC – Saranac L CBC; TL – Tupper L; WD – Wilcox Dock; WB – Whallon's Bay; WP – Westport.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 1500 RP 14 Dec; max 1650 Hurricane Mt 18 Dec; 400 RTT 24 Dec (JC).
Cackling Goose: WP 17 Dec (FCBC).
Greater White-fronted Goose: WP 17 Dec (FCBC).
Tundra Swan: 3 (2 Ad, 1 imm) AP 22 Jan thru, multiple observers.
Wood Duck: RP 21 Dec (WS); WB 29 Dec (SP); CH 4 Feb, record late CLIN.
Am. Black Duck: max 50 LC 18 Feb (BN).
N. Pintail: 2 Essex 29 Jan (T&CW).
Green-winged Teal: GBM 1 Jan (JO); AP 24 Jan, 14 Feb (BK), record late CLIN.
Canvasback: male WD 17 Dec (BK); fem CH 23 Jan (AB).
Redhead: LC 9 Jan (NYSWC); 2 CH 23 Jan (AB); Essex 26 Jan, 3 Feb (DL, LL).
Ring-necked Duck: max 20 Willsboro 29 Dec; 13 WP 31 Dec (SP).
Lesser Scaup: 2 RP 2 Jan (PH); max 24 LC 25 Feb (WS).
White-winged Scoter: CH 18 Dec (PCBC); RP 7 Feb (BH).
Long-tailed Duck: max 20 CP 3 Dec (AB); 2 RP 21 Dec (WS).
Bufflehead: max 42 Willsboro 29 Dec (SP).
Com. Goldeneye: max 1256 RP 2 Jan (PH).
Hooded Merganser: 8 Piseco L 3 Dec (LH); max 19 Fifth L 14 Dec.
Com. Merganser: max 400 LC 9 Jan (NYSWC).
Ring-necked Pheasant: MT 1 Jan (DL).
Com. Loon: Little Tupper L 6 Dec (JC); multiple reports on LC thru.
Horned Grebe: Piseco L 3 Dec (LH); max 17 AP 18 Dec (PCBC).
Red-necked Grebe: WP 8 Jan (J&PT).
Double-crested Cormorant: WP 7 Feb (EG).
Turkey Vulture: PCBC 18 Dec.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 3 RP 2 Jan (PF); 3 CP 8 Feb (SS); 3 Ticonderoga 18 Feb (BN).
N. Harrier: max 6 MT 6 Feb (ET), numerous reports from here.
Cooper's Hawk: Mirror L 1 Jan (SLCBC).
Rough-legged Hawk: 4 CP 3 Dec (AB); PtR 25 Dec (NO); max 5 MT 31 Dec thru.
GOLDEN EAGLE: Saranac L 1 Jan (SLCBC).
Am. Kestrel: WP 8 Jan (J&PT).
Peregrine Falcon: Pyramid L 7 Jan (EG).
Am. Coot: 3 CH 14 Dec (BK); LC 9 Jan (NYSWC); GBM 13 Jan (BK).

Little Gull: CH 9 Dec (DH), record late CLIN; Essex 29 Dec (SP).
Iceland Gull: LC 1 Jan (JO).
Great Black-backed Gull: max 26 LC 1 Jan (NYSWC).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

E. Screech-Owl: RP 1 Jan (JO).
Great Horned Owl: BB 1 Jan (SLCBC); LP 21 Feb (LM).
Snowy Owl: Beekmantown 12 Dec (JH); Champlain 1 Jan (JO); Plattsburgh 12-18 Jan, multiple observers throughout downtown area.
Short-eared Owl: max 6 MT 17 Dec-20 Jan (mob), first observed on FCBC.
N. Saw-whet Owl: 2 Pyramid L 7 Jan (EG).
Belted Kingfisher: 3 Saranac R 1 Jan (SLCBC); Dickinson Ctr 20 Feb (AN).
Red-bellied Woodpecker: Albee Rd 15 Dec (DL); WP 17 Dec (FCBC).
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Peru 5 Feb (PJ).
Black-backed Woodpecker: 2 RTT 31 Dec (JC); IF 1 Jan (SLCBC); 2 BB 21 Feb (AB); 2 Ferds Bog 21 Feb (KH).
N. Flicker: MT 26 Dec (ET); 2 Essex 24 Jan (SF).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: DC 29 Dec; BB 1 Jan; IL 3 Jan; PS 22 Jan; MT 29 Jan; IL 19 Feb.
Gray Jay: 2 Ferds Bog; multiple reports from BB, max of 26 on SLCBC.
Horned Lark: 17 Chazy 6 Feb (BK); 78 Chazy 26 Feb (JH), only reports.
Boreal Chickadee: 11 RTT 14 Dec (JC); max 15 BB 1 Jan (SLCBC); 3 Wright Peak 12 Jan (JD).
Tufted Titmouse: Indian L 1 Jan; LL 26 Feb (RF).
Carolina Wren: CH 31 Dec thru (NO).
Am. Robin: max 410 MT 24 Jan (SF), unusually high number.
Gray Catbird: Keene 1 Dec (MMc).
N. Mockingbird: 2 Plattsburgh 18 Dec (PCBC).
Bohemian Waxwing: arr 35 Indian L 22 Jan; max 250 Keene 26 Jan; 4 Saranac L 28 Jan; 200 LL 4 Feb; 60 Bellmont 20 Feb, last.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 near AP 18 Dec (PCBC).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr AP 18 Dec (PCBC); max 30 MT 31 Dec (SP), scarce this winter.
Song Sparrow: AP 18 Dec (PCBC); CH 14-18 Jan (BK); BB 21 Feb (AB).
White-throated Sparrow: Peru 15 Jan (JK); 3 BB 21 Feb (AB); 3 PS 22 Feb (AB).
Red-winged Blackbird: MT 1, 18 Jan (DL, SF); CH 19 Jan thru (NO); Inlet 20-23 Jan (GL).
Purple Finch: max 40 LL 13 Jan (JC).
Red Crossbill: max 23 RTT 7-24 Dec (JC); 2 PS 14 Dec (BM); 2 LL 23 Feb (AB).
White-winged Crossbill: 27 RTT 24 Dec (JC); 25 Sabattis 27 Dec; max 74 BB 1 Jan (SLCBC); 8 Ferds Bog 21 Feb (KH); 8 Mt Colvin 22 Feb (MMc).
Com. Redpoll: Gabriels 24 Jan (JS); 12 BB 18 Feb (CC), only reports.
Pine Siskin: 195 RTT 14 Dec; 450 Raquette Falls 7 Jan; max 500 Sabattis 10 Jan (JC); 23 PS 23 Jan; 300 BB 28 Jan; 35 LL 23 Feb, a very strong invasion this winter.
Evening Grosbeak: 2 Sabattis 27 Dec (JC); 23 PS 23 Jan (KH); 30 Kickerville Rd 16 Feb (AC); 35 LL 23 Feb (AB).

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REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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As winter 2012 drew to a close many residents looked back and wondered if it had ever arrived. At Albany International Airport, December ended 5.5° above average, with five days reaching 50° or higher. December precipitation was slightly higher than average, with 3.76" of rain and only a trace of snow. Most days in January felt like a "January thaw," the month ending 6° above average,

with 21 days with daytime high temperatures above freezing. January's precipitation included three snowstorms, dropping an inch or so each at Albany, but these storms transitioned to rain, leaving most of the Region's ground surfaces free of snow at month's end. February continued unusually warm, 6.2° above average, with only one day of the month showing a daytime high below freezing. A drying trend began in February that continued into early spring.

Area waterways seemed to be unusually turbid from last fall's flooding, and waterfowl were hard to find on the major rivers. Small unfrozen ponds and marshes, however, hosted several ducks that did not migrate south of the Region this winter. I cannot remember so many reports of Ring-necked Duck in midwinter, nor was it easy to parse out this year which Wood Ducks arrived early in late February from the scattered individuals that apparently never left. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Fort Miller, Washington County, was a nice surprise, as well as the Pied-billed Grebe found on the Albany CBC on 18 December.

With warm temperatures, vultures overwintered in the Region in large numbers. A rare find in midwinter in Region 8, Turkey Vultures could be found scattered throughout many towns. In January, Mona Bearor wrote that she enjoyed watching a single Turkey Vulture rock away to the west from the Hudson River feeder dam in South Glens Falls, Warren County. A small roost of Turkey Vultures remained permanently this winter in the former cement quarries of Hudson, Columbia County, along with a now year-round roost of Black Vultures. Black Vultures also seem to be creeping up the river and are regular now in Albany County. Another unusual mid-winter visitor was the **Great Egret** observed by Drew Hopkins in Greenport, Columbia County, in February.

Bill Lee, who often summarizes the sightings of select outings for the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, reported that his group, when poking about the town of Easton, Washington County, spotted a Golden Eagle at close range perched just across the river. Although occasionally sighted in winter, Golden Eagles in Region 8 are often squinted at as they soar overhead at places like the Helderberg Escarpment or Taconic Hills. Bill's group found the Golden Eagle cooperatively perched low, and Gordie Ellmers snapped some first-rate photos of the bird.

For such an abnormally mild winter, there were comparatively few half hardies that appeared on regional CBCs. Chatham and Troy's CBCs found a Common Snipe, Catskill-Coxsackie CBC tallied a high count of 17 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Gray Catbirds appeared in December in Stuyvesant, Columbia County, and on the Troy CBC, and Catskill-Coxsackie's CBC rounded up an unusually high count of 14 Yellow-rumped Warblers. Finally, a **Baltimore Oriole** hung around Schenectady County until February. Many reporters groaned that feeder activity this winter was dismal, likely due to the wide open ground cover in fields and forests that kept birds dispersed.

The real Region 8 headliner of the season is the **Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** spotted by David Rankin on the Blackhead Mountain Trail in Greene County. David was enjoying a mild mid-winter hike when his companion asked, "What's this bird that just flew off the trail?" David was able to walk directly

under the bird as it perched in a dead Balsam Fir and he noted its unmistakable brownish pink hue, gray and black crown, and bright pink of the belly and wings. Found at 3800 feet near the peak of Black Dome Mountain, the bird remained still as David snapped several confirming photos of the bird.

Shai Mitra did some digging and found records of Gray-crowned Rosy Finch from the Midwest in the 80s (Michigan and Ohio), an Illinois sighting in 1990, an Ontario bird in January of 2005, and finally a streak of sightings in Michigan in the last decade. Accepted state and province records include one in Quebec and another in Gorham, Maine, from the 1930s. This Greene County bird may be a New York State first. There is a record of Gray-crowned Rosy Finch from near Rochester on 30 January 1923, published in Beardslee and Mitchell's "Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region." According to Mitra, the Rochester bird is a single-observer sight report, and it has spiraled down from so-called "hypothetical" status to complete omission from more recent publications of the book. If this Region 8 bird is not the first Gray-crowned Rosy Finch in the State, it is certainly the first likely to pass the verification standards put forth by the NYSARC.

Finally, a departing image of this very unusual winter is the large flocks of blackbirds that staged in the Region this season. A sensory experience usually reserved only for spring in our Region, this January one could wander down to the Hudson River at dusk and hear the deafening clicks and whistles and see the reeling of 10,000+ wings of Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds clustering their crowded black bodies, regrouping, and departing in long undulating flocks.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAT – T Catskill, GREE; CBC – Christmas Bird Count; COX – T Coxsackie, GREE; FtE – T Fort Edwards, WASH; TR – Tomhannock Res, RENS; VF – Vischer's Ferry, SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: Ft Miller WASH 9 Feb.

Snow Goose: max 1500 Ft Miller WASH 6 Jan.

Brant: Stockport COLU 20 Feb.

Wood Duck: 6 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; SCHE CBC 17 Dec; SARA CBC 18 Dec; 2 Troy CBC 31 Dec; arr Livingston COLU 10 Feb.
Gadwall: 2 Troy CBC 31 Dec.
Am. Wigeon: max 8 Copake COLU 8 Jan.
N. Pintail: SARA CBC 18 Dec ; 2 Troy CBC 31 Dec.
Ring-necked Duck: 127 ALBA CBC 18 Dec; 221 SARA CBC 18 Dec; Ghent COLU Jan thru, unusual in winter.
Greater Scaup: Troy CBC 31 Dec,
Lesser Scaup: max 16 SARA CBC 18 Dec.
Surf Scoter: 2 L George WARR 5 Dec.
White-winged Scoter: 2 VF 2 Dec; SCHE CBC 17 Dec.
Long-tailed Duck: TR 1 Dec; Stillwater SARA 13 Jan.
Com. Goldeneye: max 70 FtE 12 Feb.
Barrow's Goldeneye: Ft. Miller WASH 31 Dec-31 Jan.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 3 TR 29 Dec; Troy CBC 31 Dec.
Rudy Duck: 11 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; 66 ALBA CBC 18 Dec.
Red-throated Loon: TR 1 Dec.
Com. Loon: max 8 TR 1 Dec.
Pied-billed Grebe: ALBA CBC 18 Dec.
Horned Grebe: TR 1 Dec.
Red-necked Grebe: TR 1 Dec.
GREAT EGRET: Greenport COLU 11 Feb (DH), unusual in winter.
Turkey Vulture: SCHE CBC 17 Dec; Valatie COLU 27 Jan; max 20 Hudson COLU 8 Feb.
Black Vulture: 5 Hudson Dec thru; 4 Albany CBC 18 Dec; 6 Glenmont ALBA 3 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: FtE 14 Dec; Ghent COLU 17 Dec.
Red-shouldered Hawk: Catskill GREE 12 Dec; ALBA CBC 18 Dec; Palenville GREE 29 Feb.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 2 FtE 12 Dec, scarce this winter.
Golden Eagle: Ft Miller WASH 26 Jan; Thatcher Park ALBA 12 Feb.
Am. Coot: max 45 Copake L COLU 14 Dec.
SANDHILL CRANE: Ft Plain CBC 30 Dec, unusual winter species.
Com. Snipe: Chatham CBC 17 Dec; Troy CBC 31 Dec.
Am. Woodcock: arr Greenport COLU 24 Feb, early, window kill now in Columbia-Greene Community College bird skin collection (BC).
Killdeer: arr Stockport COLU 24 Feb, early.
Iceland Gull: Cohoes ALBA 27-31 Dec.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

MONK PARAKEET: ALBA CBC 18 Dec.
Snowy Owl: Rotterdam ALBA 17 Dec; Schenectady SCHE 27 Dec, injured.
Long-eared Owl: 2 Rensselaerville ALBA 8 Dec hru.
Short-eared Owl: max 8 FtE 1 Jan.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Scotia ALBA 10 Dec; CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; 2 Ft Plain CBC 30 Dec; Berne ALBA 31 Jan.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 17 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec, high CBC count.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: Rensselaerville ALBA 3 Dec thru; New Baltimore GREE 9 Dec; FtE 11 Dec thru; Chatham COLU 19 -20 Feb; Malta SARA 23 Feb.
Horned Lark: max 450 Clermont COLU 15 Jan.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 2 Chatham CBC 17 Dec.
Hermit Thrush: last Vosburgh Marsh GREE 17 Jan.
Gray Catbird: Stuyvesant COLU 14 Dec; Troy CBC 31 Dec.
Am. Pipit: max 50 Papscanee RENS 9 Dec.
BOHEMIAN WAXWING: 16 Warrensburg WARR 19 Feb, among cedar waxwings.

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Knox ALBA 18 Feb.
Snow Bunting: max 120 Livingston COLU.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 14 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec, high CBC count; 4 Albany CBC 18 Dec.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec.
Field Sparrow: 2 Taghkanic COLU 4 Dec.
Fox Sparrow: max 5 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec.
White-crowned Sparrow: Malta SARA 25 Dec, other scattered reports from feeders.
E. Meadowlark: arr Rensselaerville ALBA 19 Feb, early.
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Taghkanic COLU 8 Dec (HS).
Red-winged Blackbird: 40,000+ Chatham CBC 17 Dec; 10,000+ Livingston COLU 29 Jan, unusually large midwinter flocks.
Rusty Blackbird: 2 Delmar ALBA 1 Feb.
Com. Grackle: 30,000+ Chatham CBC 17 Dec; 700 Poestenkill RENS 5 Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 650 Livingston COLU 4 Jan, large midwinter flock.
BALTIMORE ORIOLE: Schenectady SCHE 9 Jan; Niskayuna SCHE 16 Jan-29 Feb.
Pine Grosbeak: Ft Plain CBC 30 Dec.
GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH: Black Dome Mt GREE, 23 Dec, possible 1st NYS record, *intro.*

Red Crossbill: Chatham COLU 22 Jan; max 8 Burnt-Rossman SF SCHO 5 Feb.
White-winged Crossbill: 2 Five Rivers ALBA 4 Dec; 60 Bolton Landing CBC 17 Dec; 5 N River WARR 20 Feb.
Com. Redpoll: 6 Bolton Landing CBC 17 Dec.
Pine Siskin: 4 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; max 40 Partridge Run ALBA 7 Jan; 21 Burnt-Rossman SF SCHO 5 Feb; 150 N River WARR 20 Feb; 16 Stony Creek WARR 26 Feb.

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REGION 9—HUDSON – DELAWARE

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The winter season was simply incredibly warm. December averaged 5.5° to 7.1° warmer than normal, with normal precipitation that was virtually all rain. There was only one day that remained below freezing, 18 December. Most bodies of water remained open for the majority of the area. A variety of waterfowl remained in many areas in December for the Christmas Bird Counts. January averaged 6° to 7.7° warmer and was dry, with less than 3" of precipitation. White Plains saw eight days where the high was 50° or above. Poughkeepsie saw only five days in the month where the temperature remained below freezing—and never for more than 48 hours. Again many larger water bodies never froze. February set a record for being the warmest February on record coming in at 6.9° to 8.5° warmer than normal. The only day that remained below freezing was 13 February. Only an inch of precipitation fell in Poughkeepsie and White Plains saw just 1.4". What did fall was mostly rain except for in the northerly and higher elevations of the Region.

In summary, this winter was the warmest on record, no snowstorms occurred, and all large bodies of water and many smaller ones remained fully or at least partially open all winter long.

Some Snow Geese and Brant remained in the Region all winter. Oddly, despite the record warmth, wintering Wood Duck numbers were low.

Not surprising, a few Great Egrets and Greater Yellowlegs remained all winter along the Long Island Sound Shore of Westchester County.

Curt McDermott and Clara Montenegro found an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull and an Iceland Gull on the newly formed ice at the Beacon Train Station along the Hudson River in Dutchess County on 16 January. They checked the area again the next day and relocated the Lesser Black-backed Gull along with two Iceland Gulls and a juvenile Glaucous Gull. Later in the week they found a Glaucous Gull in the morning and three first year Iceland Gulls in the afternoon. They hit the jackpot the next day, 21 January, when they found an adult **SLATY-BACKED GULL** late in the afternoon. They viewed and photographed the bird from approximately 4 - 4:30PM. Unfortunately the bird didn't show for the large groups that formed there the next day, although five Iceland Gulls were present.

Razorbills made another incursion into Long Island Sound and were sporadically seen off Rye but also made their way down as far south as Mamaroneck.

The immature female Rufous Hummingbird, present since 6 November, continued daily at the Lenoir Nature Preserve in Yonkers until 18 December.

Red-breasted Nuthatch remained scarce all winter.

Suzanne O'Rourke photographed a **Blue-winged Warbler** on 1 January at Twin Lakes Park in Eastchester. An Orange-crowned Warbler wintered in East Kingston from late December to mid January. There was a late Nashville Warbler in Ossining on 17 December, and the only Common Yellowthroat was at Esopus Bend Nature Preserve from 12 December to 7 January. Palm Warblers were found for one day only in Tarrytown and Montgomery. A Pine Warbler was found on the Monticello CBC on 28 December, and another Pine Warbler successfully overwintered at the Lenoir Nature Preserve in Yonkers. Surprisingly, Yellow-rumped Warblers seemed scarce this winter.

The Peekskill [NYPE] CBC, held 17 December, found 86 species. Highlights were two Snow Geese, two Brant, Red-throated Loon, White-crowned Sparrow, a report of a Tundra Swan at Croton Point Park, a Merlin in Buchannan, and the previously mentioned Nashville Warbler in Ossining.

The 17 December Dutchess County [NYDC] CBC recorded 77 species and had a record high 242 Ring-necked Duck. Thanks to the warm weather a Northern Shoveler was found for only the fourth time in 54 years.

Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir [NYML] CBC recorded 74 species on 17 December. Unusual for the count were four White-winged Scoters. Other highlights included 191 Snow Geese, four Red-shouldered Hawks, two American Woodcocks, a Northern Saw-whet Owl, three Red-headed Woodpeckers, and two White-crowned Sparrows.

The 26 December Bronx/Westchester Count [NYBW] found 115 species, with 101 of them found in the Westchester County/Region 9 area. The count had a split personality. Nine new high counts were offset by twelve common species with low numbers (20+ year lows). American Tree Sparrow set an all time low for this 88-year count.

Highlights from Westchester included a Eurasian Wigeon in Premium Mill Pond, six Great Egrets together in Larchmont, seven Red-shouldered Hawks, seven Greater Yellowlegs at Five Island Park, six Razorbills, and Surf and White-winged Scoters off Rye. Long Island Sound featured record numbers of Northern Gannets and Common and Red-throated Loons.

The inaugural Ulster/Dutchess [NYUD] CBC recorded 83 species on 28 December. Highlights included a Blue-winged Teal and a Lesser Black-backed Gull in the Town of Rhinebeck, and a Cackling Goose and an Orange-crowned Warbler in the Town of Ulster.

The 30 December Putnam County count [NYPC] recorded 77 species, with high counts for Red-shouldered Hawks, Hooded Mergansers, Ring-billed Gulls, and Pileated Woodpeckers. A Northern Shoveler at Croton Falls Reservoir was a first for the count. Other highlights were a N. Saw Whet Owl in Kent, a Brant

on Croton Falls Reservoir, and an Eastern Meadowlark in Garrison Landing. Other exciting discoveries were a Northern Shrike, Merlin, and 19 Bald Eagles.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Point P ; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; RNC – Rye Nature Center ; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 5 rep from DUTC Dec; 191 NYML 17 Dec; 2,000 SGNWR 17 Dec; 70 Rosendale 18 Dec; 1000 Monroe 21 Dec; 6 Callicoon 21 Dec; 25 Lake Welch 30 Dec; 100 New Hamburg 21 Jan; 3 Pine Plains 7 Jan; 2 Blue Chip Farms 12 Feb; 3 Pine Plains 22 Feb; Mud Pond, Rhinebeck 26 Feb.
Brant: Poughkeepsie 25 Dec; Lake Gleneida 29,30 Dec; 140 New Rochelle 31 Dec; Waryas P, Poughkeepsie 6,17 Jan; 22 EGR 2 Feb; 40 EGR 11 Feb; 250 Rye 18 Feb.
CACKLING GOOSE: Town of Ulster 28 Dec (NYUD); Rockland L 11 Jan (JCi); Wallkill 20-22 Jan (MDe,TB); 2 Stone Ridge 11 Feb (MDe); Blue Chip Farms 11,12,15,25 Feb (CF); Stone Ridge 25 Feb (JBNHS).
Tundra Swan: CPP 17 Dec (CL).
Wood Duck: fewer than normal overwintered.
Gadwall: 58 Rockland L 11 Jan; 34 Rye 19 Jan.
Eurasian Wigeon: Larchmont 26 Dec (DB); New Rochelle 20,21 Jan (TB).
Am. Wigeon: Pine Plains 10 Dec (PS); Swan L 10 Dec; 2 Bashakill 14 Jan; max 95 New Rochelle 21 Jan; 15 Great Vly, Saugerties 31 Jan.
Blue-winged Teal: Rhinebeck 28 Dec (NYUD)
N. Shoveler: 45-50 Walkill NWR 2, 25 Dec; 4 Pine Plains 10 Dec; NYDC 17 Dec; 40 Rockland L 20 Dec; New Paltz 22 Dec; 2 Pine Plains 25 Dec; Croton Falls Res 30 Dec; 45 Rockland L 11 Jan; Blue Chip Farm, 14 Jan.
N. Pintail: many scattered rep throughout Reg thru; max 97 Wallkill R NWR 15 Feb.
Green-winged Teal: reports from all counties.
Canvasback: no large numbers.
Redhead: EGR 2,3,6 Dec (Ape,TB). only report.
Ring-necked Duck: 242 NYDC 17 Dec; 30 Pleasant Valley 25 Dec; 86 Beekman 24 Jan; 90 Mud Pond, Rhinebeck 26 Feb; 122 Bashakill 28 Feb.
Greater Scaup: 2000 EGR 6 Dec; 3500 EGR 1 Jan; 3800 Mamaroneck 11 Feb.
Lesser Scaup: 80 EGR 31 Dec; 292 EGR 16 Jan; 160 MC 7 Feb; 150 EGR 27 Feb.
Surf Scoter: 7 EGR 23 Dec; 4 Rye 26 Dec; 5 EGR 31 Dec; 19 Rye 18 Jan; 7 EGR 14 Feb.
White-winged Scoter: 6 Rye 10 Dec; 65 Rye 16 Dec; 4 Ashokan 17 Dec; 88 Rye 26 Dec; 30-56

EGR 31 Dec, 5,13,16 Jan; 106 EGR 26 Jan; 90 EGR 2 Feb; 375 EGR 14 Feb; 120 EGR 21 Feb; 140 EGR 24 Feb.
Long-tailed Duck: 3 Hudson R 28 Dec (NYUD); 64 EGR 26 Jan; 60 EGR 2 Feb; 2 Cruger I 26 Feb.
Bufflehead: 40 MC 1 Dec; max 75 CPP 8 Dec.
Com. Goldeneye: 38 EGR 21 Dec; 62 L Superior 1 Jan; 32 EGR 16 Jan.
Hooded Merganser: 36 Morningside L 15 Dec; 30 Sylvan L, Beekman 25 Dec; 130 Croton Falls Res 29 Dec; 265 NYPC 30 Dec.
Com. Merganser: good numbers in the hundreds for large freshwater lakes; low numbers on the Hudson.
Red-breasted Merganser: Esopus 14 Jan (FM, DF)
Ruddy Duck: 76 Sylvan L, Beekman 2 Dec; no large rafts this winter.
Ring-necked Pheasant: 2 Wurtsboro 1 Jan; Amenia 9, 26 Jan; 3 reports from DUTC in Feb.
Red-throated Loon: CPP 17 Dec (LL, MB); 52 Rye 26 Dec; 18 EGR 26 Jan; 25 Rye 2 Feb.
Com. Loon: Rockland L 19 Dec, 18 Feb; 37 Long Island Sound 26 Dec; 22 Rye 31 Dec; 22 Rye 2 Feb
Pied-billed Grebe: good numbers overwintered.
Horned Grebe: max 12 EGR 14 Feb.
Red-necked Grebe: EGR 21, 30, 31 Dec, 18 Jan 2,11,18,20 Feb; 3 EGR 14 Feb.
N. Gannet: 2 MC 1 Dec; 9 EGR 16 Dec; 47 Rye 26 Dec; 3 EGR 25 Jan; 11 Rye 18 Jan; 5 EGR 11 Feb.
Double-crested Cormorant: 48 Rye 26 Dec.
Great Cormorant: 27 Peekskill Bay 19 Feb.
Great Blue Heron: max 8 EGR 2, 12, 24, 29 Dec, 6 Feb.
Great Egret: MC 7 Dec; 6 Larchmont 26 Dec (NYBW); Rockland L 4, 12,16 Jan (CW,RGu); Larchmont 2,14,30 Jan (FG).
Black Vulture: 6 Lenoir Nature Preserve 26 Dec (JO); 60 Wallkill 24 Jan (JH).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 19 NYPC 30 Dec; 15 Mongaup Res 24 Jan.
N. Harrier: 15-16 Galeville P 16 Dec - 1 Feb (mob).
N. Goshawk: Saugerties Jan-Feb; Aden Hill Road, SULL 3 Feb; Tallman Mt SP 15 Feb; Rhinebeck 20 Feb; Bashakill 27 Feb.
Red-shouldered Hawk: significantly more present than in past few winters; 4 NYML 17 Dec; 7 NYBW 26 Dec; 6 NYPC 30 Dec.
Rough-legged Hawk: 1-5 Galeville Park/ SGNWR 10 Dec - 18 Feb; Black Dirt Region 18,30,31 Dec; 2 Jeffersonville 22 Jan; 2 Indiana Rd, Goshen 31 Jan.
Golden Eagle: Delaware R 29 Dec; Saugerties Dec; Claryville 2 Jan; Stissing Mt 16 Feb.
Am. Kestrel: a handful of rep from most counties, higher than in recent years
Merlin: Verbank 4 Dec; Buchannan 17 Dec; Black Dirt Region 18 Dec; T Ulster 26 Dec; NYPC 30 Dec; Poughkeepsie 4,5,8 Jan, 15 Feb; Forsyth Nature Center, Kingston 9 Jan – 28 Feb; Vassar Farm 14 Jan; Amenia 31 Jan; James Baird SP 1 Feb; Taconic SP 12 Feb.
Virginia Rail: MC 26 Dec; 2 NYHV 1 Jan.
Am. Coot: 200 Wallkill R NWR 11 Dec; 223 Rockland L 11 Jan.
Sandhill Crane: Pawling 27 Dec (MO).
Killdeer: arr 3 Salt Point 29 Feb.
Greater Yellowlegs: 7 Five Island P 26 Dec (NYBW); 4 New Rochelle 20 Jan (TB).
Ruddy Turnstone: EGR 3 Dec.
Purple Sandpiper: 50 EGR 23 Dec; 20 EGR 14 Feb.
Am. Woodcock: 2 Stone Ridge 17 Dec; Gardiner 14 Feb; Poughquag 19 Feb; Harriman 27 Feb.
Bonaparte's Gull: Rye 15 Dec; 8 Rye 26 Dec; 6 Kiamesha L 28 Dec; EGR 21 Jan; Kingston Pt P 18 Feb.
Ring-billed Gull: 2355 NYPC 30 Dec, high.
Iceland Gull: T Ulster 15 Jan (JCl); 1-5 Beacon 16, 17, 20, 22, 23 Jan (CMc, mob); Newburgh 21 Feb (KM).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: Rhinebeck 28 Dec (NYUD); Beacon 16, 17, 23 Jan, 1 Feb (CMc,CMo,AL, KHa); Red Mill Rd, Wallkill 20,24 Jan (JH).
SLATY-BACKED GULL: Beacon 21 Jan (CMc, CMo), ph.
Glaucous Gull: Beacon 17,20,23 Jan (CMc, CMo); 1-2 Red Mill Rd, Wallkill 20,24,25 Jan (JH).
Razorbill: EGR 12,13 Dec (TB); 2-7 EGR 21-31 Dec; 6 Rye 26 Dec (NYBW); EGR 13 Jan; 4 Rye 18 Jan; 3 EGR 26 Jan (NYRBA); 4 Rye 2 Feb (TB); 7 EGR 14 Feb; 6 Mamaroneck 11 Feb.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: 23 New Rochelle 20 Jan; 8 New Rochelle 11 Feb.
Snowy Owl: Esopus 3 Feb; Rondout Lighthouse, Kingston 4 Feb (FM, DF, PS, MDe).
Short-eared Owl: 6-10 Galeville Park/ SGNWR 16-30 Dec; 3 Sullivan Co Airport Feb; 11-13 Galeville Park 30 Jan - 19 Feb.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Accord 17 Dec; Kent 30 Dec.
Rufous Hummingbird: Lenoir Nature Preserve 1-18 Dec (BiV, MB).
Red-headed Woodpecker: 1-3 Esopus/New Paltz 15 Dec - 11 Feb (mob); Amenia 22 Jan.

Pileated Woodpecker: 27 NYPC 30 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Bashakill 27 Feb (JH).
N. Shrike: Forestburg 14 Dec (LV); Lake Welch 28,31 Dec (JP, DA, RC); NYPC 30,31 Dec; Forsterdale 28 Jan, 3, 5, 16 Feb (JH, ABo, LV, AGi, GS, BH); Wallkill R NWR 2,4,5,10 Feb (MZ).
Fish Crow: good numbers southern part Reg with a few reports even from Ulster in Jan and Feb.
Com. Raven: 3 New Rochelle 18 Jan (ABl), now can be found anywhere at anytime in Region 9.
Horned Lark: 300 Black Dirt Region 18 Dec; 75 Red Hook 22 Jan.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: very few this winter.
HouseWren: EGR 13, 24, 25, 27, 31 Dec.
Marsh Wren: MC 2, 26 Dec, 5 Jan.
Gray Catbird: Saugerties 2 Dec; Hurley 14 Dec; Saugerties 26, 31 Dec; Gramsville 1, 2 Jan; Pawling 25 Jan; Sleightsburg 26 Feb.
Brown Thrasher: Katonah 1 Dec – 6 Feb; Lewisboro 12 Dec (TJ); MC 26 Dec (BeV).
Am. Pipit: 2 CPP 4, 25 Dec (LL,AW); MC 8 Dec; Callicoon 15 Jan; CPP 22 Jan (MB).

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Snow Bunting: 13 EGR 2 Dec; 2 Bashakill 25 Dec; 26 Lake Welch 30 Dec, 2 Jan; 5 Red Hook 22 Jan.
Blue-winged Warbler: Twin Lakes Park, Eastchester 1 Jan (SO), ph.
Orange-crowned Warbler: East Kingston 28 Dec, 14 -15 Jan (MDe, PS).
Nashville Warbler: Ossining 17 Dec (CR).
Com. Yellowthroat: Esopus Bend Nature Preserve 12 Dec - 7 Jan (FM, ABe, SC, DF).
Palm Warbler: Tarrytown 31 Dec (CS, CR); Montgomery 2 Feb (DP).
Pine Warbler: Monticello CBC 28 Dec (MC, PD,VF, K&CH); Lenoir Nature Preserve 11 Dec, 14 Jan-29 Feb (TJ,MB).
Yellow-rumped Warbler: surprisingly – not many around this winter.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Hurley 5 Dec; Neversink 29 Jan; Wurtsboro 2 Feb.
Chipping Sparrow: CPP 15 Jan (mob).
Vesper Sparrow: CPP 4 Dec (LL).
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow: MC 26 Dec.
White-crowned Sparrow: CPP 17 Dec; 2 NYML 17 Dec; 3-4 LaGrange 6 Jan -29 Feb; Beacon 17 Jan; LaGrangeville 1, 4 Feb; Locust Grove 9 Feb; 2 North East 28 Feb.
E. Meadowlark: Garrison 30 Dec.
Rusty Blackbird: EGR 3 Dec; Red Hook 28 Dec; 2 Red Hook 21 Jan; 30 Wallkill 24 Jan; 4 Piermont 11 Feb; 2 Tivoli Bay 18 Feb.
Com. Grackle: 1,000 Kingston 17 Dec; 2000 Saugerties 23 Feb.
White-winged Crossbill: 15-50 Cooley Bog 3-22 Feb (JH, mob).
Com. Redpoll: 2 Cooley Bog 5 Feb (RD); Slide Mt 19 Feb (NZ); Millbrook 26 Feb.
Pine Siskin: rep mainly from SULL; 60 -100 Cooley Bog 3-15 Feb.

EXOTICS – ESCAPES

Chukar: Millbrook 5 Dec (APo).

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REGION 10—MARINE

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Winter in Region 10 was much warmer than usual and mostly dry. At Central Park, the average temperatures in December, January, and February were 5.8°, 6.1° and 5.6° above normal, respectively. While precipitation was at the long-term average for December, both January and February were drier than normal. February recorded less than 50% of the average rainfall. Similar data was recorded at Islip in central Suffolk: temperatures averaged about 5.3° warmer each month, but rainfall was 4.1" below the long term average for the period.

Snow was scarce, with only a single mid-January storm bringing any sizable and long-lasting accumulation. Even that was gone within a week.

The warmer winter pushed phenological clocks forward. As long-time weather-watcher Bob Kurtz put it, "Red-eared Sliders, Spring Peepers, flying insects, singing Fox Sparrow and some cherry blossoms all celebrated the start of spring on January 31st!"

The relative warmth appeared to be responsible for many unusual winter records of species that normally would have perished or moved south. This was epitomized by the attempted overwintering of three **Rufous Hummingbirds** and the occurrence of 16 species of warblers in the Region. The hummingbirds were aided by feeders, as was at least one of the warblers. The first, in Noyac, continued from the fall season and remained until 17 December, when it disappeared abruptly after the formula for its food source changed. The homeowner was convinced to give it protein-rich food. The bird tested the food from all four portals at the feeder and promptly disappeared. The second occurred in Georgica, East Hampton, at a feeder where Rufous Hummingbirds have occurred on two prior winters. This one hung on until 1 February after which it was not seen. The third was discovered at AMNH where it was feeding on flowers of the exotic *Mahonia bealei*. A feeder was also placed in the area, and the bird made it through the period to become the first example of the species successfully overwintering in New York. The presumptuously misguided intentions of wildlife "rehabilitators" who unsuccessfully sought to capture and "save" the bird soon after it was discovered would have precluded this milestone event.

The presence of warblers, some of which should have been in the tropics, was particularly impressive. I have included all reports of most species below to provide documentation of the event. Most of the individuals were encountered in December, but a few were not discovered until January or February. A few survived to the end of the season. The species typically recorded in winter were seen in large numbers. Seventeen Yellow-breasted Chats, 17 Pine Warblers, and nine Common Yellowthroats were tallied. At least 26 Orange-crowned Warblers were present, with several surviving through February. Less common, but seen somewhat regularly in recent years, were eight Nashville Warblers, with three being discovered in January, and three Ovenbirds. A Prairie Warbler lingered in Central Park until 2 December. Remarkably, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler discovered 17 December at a Napeague feeder was still surviving on peanut butter at the end of the period. Other surprises included a Black-and-white Warbler and an American Redstart found at the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens on 13 December; a Yellow Warbler photographed in Brooklyn on 29 December; a Black-throated Green Warbler that spent a week in Inwood Hill Park beginning on 31 December; and a Northern Parula discovered on Staten Island on 28 February, which begged the question of where it had spent the winter. Two other very rare western warblers are discussed below.

Other lingering species seen during the period included Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, Semipalmated and Piping plovers, American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, Forster's

Tern, many House Wrens, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Vesper Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, and Baltimore Oriole.

A good number of rarities were found this season. **Pink-footed Goose**, which was only added to the New York list in 2007, was reported twice this winter and seems to be becoming more regular in the Region. A **Ross's Goose** found during the fall in Brooklyn continued until 4 December. Two **"Black" Brant** were reported, one from Nassau and the other from Brooklyn. A **Barnacle Goose** appeared for eight days in Eastport allowing many people to view it. After several years of being more regular in the Region, only one **Barrow's Goldeneye**, at JBWR, was regularly seen. A female found off City Island, Bronx, was seen once and not thereafter. The **Eared Grebe** found during the fall at JBWR continued until 29 January. Four **Northern Fulmars** seen on a 30 December pelagic trip off Jones Beach were the only report.

A **Gyrfalcon** just north of Jones Beach was photographed by an astonished Carl Safina and then vanished. An adult **Broad-winged Hawk** on the Staten Island Christmas Count should be documented with NYSARC. A **Black Rail** appeared on the Captree Christmas Count. Several reports over the last decade suggest that this species may skulk into the winter in the Region on a regular basis. **American Avocets** appeared in two different locations in Brooklyn and Queens on 3 Decemeber; one remained until 10 December. A **Red Phalarope** in the middle of Red Hook, Brooklyn on 17 December must have been a mind-blower for its hard-working discoverers but was a one-day-wonder. **Common Murres** were reported on four different pelagic trips, continuing to add data establishing it as a common wintering resident just offshore. Two reports from the island itself are probably average for recent winters. A lone **Black Guillemot** was reported from Montauk Village on 17 December. Eleven **Atlantic Puffins** were seen 30 December on a pelagic trip off Jones Beach.

A **White-winged Dove** appeared on Staten Island 11-19 February reminding the rest of us of how lottery-like rare birds are at feeders. A **Barred Owl** wintered in Central Park. A Regionally-rare **Pileated Woodpecker** was photographed at Piping Rock Golf Course in Matinecock on 31 December much to the surprise of the birders who were there looking for the **Painted Bunting** present from 17 December-18 January. Pre-Christmas bird count scouting produced a **Sedge Wren** at Orient Beach SP and a **Mountain Bluebird** in Calverton. Both birds were seen by most birders who went to look for them in the weeks following their discovery.

Perhaps the highlight of the season was New York's first record for **Grace's Warbler**, discovered by wunderkinds Andrew Baksh and Doug Gochfeld at Point Lookout during the Southern Nassau CBC on 1 January. Thanks to cell phones and social media word spread quickly and more than 100 people observed the bird within a few hours of its being discovered. It was seen briefly once after a Merlin nearly decapitated it on 3 January. An **"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler** wintered at Sunken Meadow SP from 11 January to 27 February.

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** in Amagansett from 17 December to 3 January continued a trend of this species being seen later in the year. A **Lark Sparrow**

suddenly appeared at a Montauk feeder in early February and disappeared two days later. An **"Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco** was photographed at a Staten Island feeder in January.

The mild winter is presumably implicated in the large number of species found during the period: 218 plus four additional forms, at least three hybrids, and three exotics. Despite the excellent tally, Tundra Swan, Willet, N. Saw Whet Owl, and Nelson's Sparrow were notable in their absence.

Waterfowl numbers were again poor this season, continuing the recent trend. Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Ring-necked Duck, and Hooded Merganser were the only species whose numbers in the Region appear to be increasing. Highest counts for puddle and bay ducks were notably low. Northern Pintail was not encountered in high numbers except at Tobay Pond. Canvasback has become so scarce that rarely were more than 10-20 reported from a location. Greater Scaup high counts numbered six thousand, not the tens of thousands that were commonplace even ten years ago. Sea duck numbers, especially Common Eiders and all three scoters, were good throughout the Region and not just at Montauk Point. A pair of Trumpeter Swans returned again to a lake in Yaphank for the fourth winter in a row. Ten or more Cackling Geese were reported. Four Eurasian Wigeon and two "Eurasian" Teal were found. King Eiders were scarce including at Montauk.

Gallinaceous birds, except the Wild Turkey, continued to decline. Only one report of N. Bobwhite was received. Loons and grebes were found in good numbers, and Red-necked Grebes seemed easier to find throughout the area as compared with recent years, with good numbers in places like Jamaica Bay. Two Brown Pelicans were found in Nassau during December continuing a trend of recent years. Great Egrets survived the period at several localities.

Black Vulture continued to be regularly seen in the area, particularly on Staten Island. Turkey Vultures have become so regular that they are now under-reported. Bald Eagle numbers held steady this winter with more than 20 reports, many pertaining to adult birds. Similarly Red-shouldered Hawk continues to increase as a wintering species. Rough-legged Hawks were scarce, while American Kestrel continues its precipitous decline, only being regular in Manhattan, Floyd Bennett Field, and in open space from Calverton to Riverhead. While Merlins seemed slightly less common than in recent winters, Peregrine Falcons continue to be seen regularly throughout the Region.

A Semipalmated Plover and Piping Plover overwintered at Jones Inlet, as did American Oystercatcher. Counts of Greater Yellowlegs seemed to be higher than normal on several Christmas Counts. A Marbled Godwit found in Brooklyn on 16 December could not be reproduced the next day on the Christmas Count. Red Knots were scarce again this winter, the only reports from Jones Beach and Moriches Bay. A few Western Sandpipers were spotted in January from Tobay and Jones Inlet.

Little and Black-headed Gulls were scarce. Good numbers of Lesser Black-backed, Iceland, and Glaucous Gulls were uncovered. Laughing Gulls did their annual disappearing act just before Christmas Count season, but one was found on 1 January. Other late species included a Forster's Tern at Point Lookout on

11 December and 2 Parasitic Jaegers at Fort Tilden on 9 December. A smattering of single Dovkies was reported onshore, while pelagic trips only managed small numbers. Razorbills appeared early at Montauk and then spread themselves throughout the Region in unprecedented numbers. They were reported from every county except New York.

About five Snowy Owls were reported along Long Island's South shore. Much more surprising was a one-day appearance at Pelham Bay Park. Photographs of a particularly stunning bleached-white individual allowed it to be followed as it moved from Fire Island to Jones Beach West End to Breezy Pt. during the course of the winter. Short-eared Owl was difficult to find, and all seven reported did not stay long at one place.

Three Northern Shrikes were reported, one of which was fairly cooperative at Floyd Bennett Field. Common Ravens were reported from every county except Brooklyn and were nesting in the Bronx by season's end. A report of Indigo Bunting in Central Park was unfortunately not well-documented. Three Lincoln's Sparrows and four Dickcissels were recorded during the period. December produced 10 reports of Baltimore Oriole, but an adult male found at Montauk in late February was completely surprising. The few reports of Purple Finch all occurred before mid-December. A Common Redpoll, several Pine Siskins, and a White-winged Crossbill seen between 24 January and 1 February aroused hopes for a late-season winter finch flight that never materialized. Several other passerines were notably less common than usual this winter including Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting.

Two apparently uncommon hybrid geese were reported during the season. Steve Walter photographed an apparent Brant x Cackling Goose at Flushing Meadow on 23 December, while Doug Gochfeld documented a Brant x Snow Goose at Floyd Bennett Field on 5 January.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMNH – American Museum of Natural History, NEWY; BLSP – Belmont Lake SP, SUFF; BBYC – Bell Port Bay Yacht Club, SUFF; BPt – Breezy Point, QUEE; BBG – Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, KING; BP – Bryant P NEWY; CSP – Caumsett SP, SUFF; COR – Cemetery of the Resurrection, RICH; CP – Central P, NEWY; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field, KING; HP – Hook Pd, East Hampton SUFF; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, QUEE-KING; JBWE – Jones Beach West End, NASS; KP – Kissena P, QUEE; LMI – Lake Montauk Inlet & vic; Marra – Marratooka L, Mattituck, SUFF; MiPd – Miller's Pd, Smithown, SUFF; MP – Montauk Pt, SUFF; NYBG – New York Botanical Gardens, BRON; PBP – Pelham Bay P, BRON; PRGC – Piping Rock Golf Club, Matinecock, NASS; POJB – Pelagic trip off Jones Beach; PL – Point Lookout, NASS; PPk – Propsect P, KING; RSP – Riverside P, NEWY; Shinn – Shinnecock Bay & Inlet; SPCP – Smith Point CP, SUFF; SMSP – Sunken Meadow SP, SUFF. For other locations mentioned more than once below, the county is given in the first citation but not thereafter.

Christmas Bird Counts referred to below: BKCC – Brooklyn; CPCC – Captree; CSCC – Central Suffolk; MKCC – Montauk; NNCC – Northern Nassau; ORCC – Orient; QUCC – Queens; QWCC – Quogue Watermill; SACC – Sagaponack; SNCC – Southern Nassau.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE: Alley Park QUEE 25 Jan (ABk); Holtsville SUFF 21-22 Feb (DR); *intro.*

Greater White-fronted Goose: 3 South Fork SUFF, mainly HP and Deep Hollow, Montauk 1 Dec-11 Feb; 1 NW Suffolk, seen from CSP to Northport 13 Dec-15 Jan (G. Straus, *et al*); ad van Cortlandt P BRON continuing thru 25 Feb; Gerry Park, Roslyn NASS 17 Dec-22 Jan (J. Field); Marra 24 Dec (JSp); Stony Brook Mill Pd 27 Dec; Holtsville 8 Jan (D. LaMagna).

Snow Goose: 700 BKCC 17 Dec.

ROSS'S GOOSE: FBF & Drier Offerman Pk KING thru 4 Dec.

Brant: 23,699 BKCC 17 Dec; 32,225 SNCC 1 Jan; 8500 Captree SP 5 Feb (PJL, SSM).

"Black" Brant: Jones Inlet NASS 28 Jan (PAG, AnW, *et al*); FBF 5 Jan (DG).

BARNACLE GOOSE: Eastport SUFF 7-14 Jan (PP, *et al*), *intro.*

Cackling Goose: 1 HP 4 Dec (SSM, PJL); Bridgehampton to Watermill SUFF 11-24 Dec (K&BRu); max 3 on SACC 18 Dec; NNCBC 17 Dec; BLSP 18 Dec (BB); Connetquot SUFF 18 Dec; Seatuck SUFF 18 Dec; 2 CSP 22 Dec-19 Jan (R. Rossett); MiPd 23 Dec (BBk); Marra 16 Jan; 2 Mecox SUFF 28 Jan (SSM, PJL).

Tundra Swan: none.

Trumpeter Swan: 2 Yaphank 23 Dec-8 Jan (RRK), *intro.*

Eurasian Wigeon: Tottenville RICH 3 Dec-4 Feb (SIW); Gardiner's I SUFF 17 Dec; JBWR 27 Dec-29 Jan (D. Rankin et al); FBF 4-21 Feb (RJ).

Blue-winged Teal: QWCC 17 Dec; SNCC 1 Jan; 2 Mill Pd Bellmore NASS 10 Feb (DG).

N. Shoveler: max 434 SNCC 1 Jan.

N. Pintail: max 145 SNCC 1 Jan, mostly at Tobay Pd.

Green-winged Teal: max 515 SNCC 1 Jan.

"EURASIAN" GREEN-WINGED TEAL: JBWR 29 Jan (DJF); Smith Pd, Rockville Center NASS 4-25 Feb (S. Schellenger).

Canvasback: widespread but in small numbers; rarely more than 10 seen at a location, *intro.*

Redhead: max 75 CPCC 18 Dec; 65 Capri Lk West Islip SUFF 7 Jan (RRK).

Ring-necked Duck: 406 MiPd 27 Feb (J. Turner).

Greater Scaup: 5000+ Cold Spring Harbor SUFF 5 Jan (DR); 6000 Dead Horse Bay KING 14 Feb; small numbers for max counts, *intro.*

Lesser Scaup: 965 Massapequa Lk NASS 26 Feb (SA).

King Eider: f Glen Cove NASS 10 Dec thru (SA); m MP 17 Dec (TWB); m Gardiner's I 17 Dec; m Mecox 18 Dec (RRV, T. Brown); f MP 1-6 Jan (AC, *et al*); f JBWE 1 Jan (KF, *et al*), *intro.*

Com. Eider: max 1000 MP 15 Jan; 200 Jones Inlet 26 Jan (SS, JG); 250 POJB 28 Jan (PAG, *et al*).

Harlequin Duck: arr Jones Inlet/PL 4 Dec (SA), 3 by 26 Dec cont until 6 on 19 Feb (BB) & 5 thru; imm m Shinn 5-30 Dec (B. Wilson); Orient

Pt SUFF 31 Dec (RRK); m Fort Salonga SUFF 6 Jan (DR); m Glen Cove 3 Feb (MN).
Long-tailed Duck: max 1184 SNCC 1 Jan.
Barrow's Goldeneye: JBWR 3 Dec thru (L. Swenson); f City Island BRON 26 Dec (SW), *intro.*
Com. Merganser: max 27 Dec SMCC, low max count.
Ruddy Duck: 3382 BKCC 17 Dec.
N. Bobwhite: Rocky Point SUFF 25 Jan (V. Eletto), only report, *intro.*
Wild Turkey: large numbers noted in NASS and SUFF.
Red-throated Loon: max 724 Springs to Montauk SUFF 4 Dec (AnW).
Horned Grebe: max 128 Springs to Montauk 4 Dec (AnW).
Red-necked Grebe: widespread: Fort Pond Bay Montauk & vic 3 Dec-18 Feb, max 7 on 28 Jan (SSM, PJL); Jamaica Bay 9 Dec-18 Feb, max 7 on 8 Jan (TWB, GB) & 8 on 18 Feb (PJ), *intro.*
Eared Grebe: JBWR thru 29 Jan.
N. Fulmar: 4 POJB 30 Dec (RF, RB).
Brown Pelican: Sands Point NASS 12 Dec (G. Quinn); imm Lido Blvd NASS 26 Dec (A. & L. Antony, M. Goldstein), *intro.*
Double-crested Cormorant: max 147 SNCC 1 Jan.
Am. Bittern: small numbers along south shore, mainly Dec & Jan; Sunken Meadow SP 27 Dec SMCC; max 3 SPCP 27 Dec (DG, SBl, SB, DH).
Great Egret: successfully overwintered at sev areas on LI including Staten I, Jones Beach, Shinn, SMSP; max 22 SMCC 27 Dec; 18 SMSP 6 Feb (K&SF); 20 SNCC 1 Jan.
Snowy Egret: 3 QUCC 18 Dec.
Green Heron: PPk 17 Dec-1 Jan; Mt Sinai 27 Dec.
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: SNCC 1 Jan.
Black Vulture: 2 Bloomingdale Pk RICH (J. Stetson), perhapsame two seen 3 Jan & 28 Feb; Eastport 27 Dec (fide ES); NYBG 18 Feb (DB); PPK 25 Jan (J. Ascher), *intro.*
Turkey Vulture: 8 rep Dec; 2 rep Jan; 8 rep Feb; max 10 Fresh Kills RICH 2 Dec (MSP); 6 NYBG 17 Dec (DB); 7 NNCC 17 Dec; 10 SICC 17 Dec.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: Dreier-Offerman P KING 2 Dec (Alex Wilson).
Bald Eagle: more than 20 reports; reported from all counties; max 4 Gardiner's I. 17 Dec, *intro.*
N. Goshawk: Mt Loretto RICH 10 Dec (H. Fischer); NYBG 17 Dec (DB).
Red-shouldered Hawk: 3 Gravesend Bay, KING 1 Dec (DG); Camp Hero St Pk, Montauk 18 Dec (JCJr); ad Northville SUFF 1 Jan & 29 Feb (MLL); Calverton 11 Jan (PP); Rosedale QUEE 18 Jan (PSc); COR 25 Jan (ACi); ad Massapequa 3 Feb (K&SF); FBF 18 Feb (PJ), *intro.*
BROAD-WINGED HAWK: ad Staten I. 17 Dec (SIW, ACi, D. Eib, MSP), *intro.*
Rough-legged Hawk: 5 Gardiner's I. 17 Dec; Plum Island SUFF 31 Dec (MLL); Poquott SUFF 15 Jan (S. & M. Brody); PBP 12 Feb (M. Carney); scarce.
Am. Kestrel: uncommon; f Shinn 3 Dec (CSt); BP 15 Dec (BCa); COR late Dec-17 Jan (ACi); up to 3 FBF 18 Dec-29 Feb; 2 Calverton 29 Dec-5 Jan (L. Ormand); Hither Hills SP SUFF 7 Jan (RRK); Shoreham sod fields SUFF 15 Jan (RRK); Riverhead sod fields 13 Feb (PD); Upper West Side NEWY 16 Feb (AP); *intro.*
Merlin: small numbers reported throughout Region.
GYRFALCON: gray morph Wantagh Pkwy, Jones Beach 14 Jan (C. Safina, P. Paladines, ph), *intro.*
Peregrine Falcon: good numbers on Christmas Bird Counts and thru.
BLACK RAIL: CPCC 18 Dec (J. Quinlan).
Clapper Rail: very few reports.
Am. Coot: max 280 Patchogue L 8 Jan (RRK).
Semipalmated Plover: PL/JBWE 15 Jan-27 Feb (A. Guthrie, TWB, GB), *intro.*
Piping Plover: PL/JBWE 4 Dec, 15 Jan-27 Feb (A. Guthrie, TWB, GB), *intro.*
Am. Oystercatcher: Brooklyn 16 Dec; 61 SNCC 1 Jan, mostly from Jones Inlet; 31 JBWE 10 Feb (DG); Great Kills RICH 17 Feb (CB), arr?, *intro.*
Am. Avocet: Coney I. KING 3-10 Dec (HL, RJ); ad f JBWR 3-4 Dec (L. Spitalnik, JK, N. Souirgi), *intro.*
Greater Yellowlegs: max 16 BKCC 17 Dec; 13 QWCC 17 Dec; 20 SNCC 1 Jan; also Accabonac SUFF 12 Feb (K&BRu), *intro.*
Willet: none.
Marbled Godwit: FBF 16 Dec (CF, SB), *intro.*
Red Knot: 40 JBWE 4 Dec; 9 Cupsogue Beach Co Pk SUFF 3 Dec (RRK); 12 CSCC 27 Dec; SNCC 1 Jan; 4 JBWE 10 Feb (DG), *intro.*
Western Sandpiper: JBWE 4 Dec; 3 Tobay Pond 1 Jan (HDM, TWB, *et al*); 2 JBWE 23 Jan (K&SF).
Purple Sandpiper: fairly common and widespread, but no large groups.
Dunlin: max 4642 SNCC 1 Jan; 3200 JBWE 28 Jan (K&SF).
Long-billed Dowitcher: 2 JBWE 9-14 Dec (RJK); HP 18 Dec (A. Auerbach, *et al*); 8 SNCC 1 Jan; 2 JBWE 15 Feb (KF).

Wilson's Snipe: max 7 Georgica SUFF 5 Jan (HDM); 7 Moriches SUFF 5 Feb (PP).
Am. Woodcock: BP 6 Jan; displaying by early Feb.
RED PHALAROPE: Red Hook KING 17 Dec (JZ, *et al*), *intro.*
Black-legged Kittiwake: 127 SPCP 27 Dec (DG, SBl, SB, DH); 40 MP 11 Jan (PMP); 29 POJB 28 Jan (PAG, AnW, *et al*).
Black-headed Gull: ad Owl's Head Treatment Plant KING 23 Dec-11 Feb (TWB, GB); Veteran's Memorial P KING 17-28 Jan (SBl), same ind.
Little Gull: ad PL 10 Dec (TWB, GB); imm Jones Inlet 17 Jan (KF).
Laughing Gull: SNCC 1 Jan.
Iceland Gull: only reported on Long Island, at least 15 ind.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: many through Region; max 5 BBYC 1 Feb (MM).
Glaucous Gull: two 1st y, one 2nd y southwest Brooklyn/FBF/BP thru 10 Feb; Jones Beach 4 Dec (AG); 2 SNCC 1 Jan; imm Sagaponack SUFF 1 Jan (AC); 1st y BBYC1 Feb thru (MM), 2 on 12 Feb (JGl).
"Nelson's" Gull: Calverton 27 Dec (DG, SBl, SB, DH).
Forster's Tern: PL 11 Dec (TWB, GB).
Parasitic Jaeger: 2 Ft. Tilden 9 Dec (SBl).
Dovekie: MP 21 Dec-3 Jan (R&LF, JD); 35 POJB 30 Dec (RF, RB); 6 POJB 8 Jan (PAG); injured Bush Terminal Pier P 13 Jan (fide PD, ph), may be 2ndcounty record; 12 POJB 28 Jan (PAG, AnW); Culloden Pt Montauk 28 Jan (SSM, PJL); MP 28 Jan (SSM, PJL).
COMMON MURRE: MP 30 Dec (SB, Nick Sly); 3 POJB 30 Dec (RF, RB); 4 POJB 8 Jan (PAG); Massapequa 25 Jan; 86 POJB 28 Jan (PAG, *et al*); Ocean off Queens 5 Feb (AG, *et al*), *intro.*
Razorbill: reported in all counties except New York on both north and south shores of LI; 125 Springs to Montauk, SUFF 4 Dec (AnW); 60 MP 4 Dec (HM, PMP), subsequent numbers at MP mid-Jan thru lower than recent years with no reports higher than 25; 5 NNCBC 17 Dec; City Island 26 Dec (SW); 14 Old Field Pt SUFF 27 Dec; 81 SPCP 27 Dec (DG, SBl, SB, DH); 165 MP 8 Jan; 45 Culloden Pt (K&SF); 3 Lemon Creek Pier RICH 12 Jan (ACi); 100+ JBWE 26 Jan (SS, JG); 481 POJB 28 Jan (PAG, *et al*); PBP 6-19 Feb (RA), 2 on 12 Feb; 53 JBWE 10 Feb (DG); 3 Brooklyn 11 Feb (HL & RJ).
Black Guillemot: Montauk 17 Dec (SSM).
ATLANTIC PUFFIN: 11 POJB 30 Dec (RF, RB).

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: Staten Island 11 Feb thru (ACi).
Monk Parakeet: 53 BKCC 17 Dec; 14 QUCC 18 Dec; 2 CPCC 18 Dec; 24 SNCC 1 Jan; 5 Massapequa 7 Feb (DK).
Barn Owl: JBWR 4 Dec (SA), 10 Jan (K&SF) & 26 Feb; 3 SNCC 1 Jan.
Great Horned Owl: reported from all counties; may be nesting in several NYC parks.
Snowy Owl: Shinn 3 Dec-8 Jan (K&BRu); Hicks Island, Napeague SUFF thru 3 Dec, 28 Jan thru; PBP 3 Dec (DB, *et al*); JBWE 4 Dec (SA); SPCP 14-29 Dec (K. Connolly); Fire Island 18 Dec; distinctive, very white ind later seen at JBWE 1-25 Jan & BPt 4-5 Feb; imm Atlantic Beach NASS 16 Jan (SA); 2 BPt 4 Feb (A. Midland), one thru 15 Feb, *intro.*
Barred Owl: CP 23 Dec-17 Jan.
Long-eared Owl: BKCC 17 Dec; 3 Bridgehampton 18 Dec (RRV*et al*); PBP 4-31 Jan (JG, SS).
Short-eared Owl: MKCC 17 Dec; SICC 17 Dec; Cedar Beach SUFF 18 Dec (RJK); Wainscott SUFF 18 Dec (JCJr, R. McGrath, R. Gostic); Shinn 24 Dec-2 Jan (RRK); FBF 29 Dec (JZ, A. Baratz); Brookfield Dump & vic RICH 19-20 Feb (M. Shanley).
N. Saw-whet Owl: none.
RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Noyac SUFF 1-17 Dec (C. Gaeckle, HDM, J. Shemilt); Georgica 1 Dec-1 Feb (J. Ross, J. Shemilt, *et al*); AMNH 14 Dec thru (N. Burg), feeding on *Mahonia bealei*, *intro.*
Red-headed Woodpecker: COR 13-15 Dec (ACi); CP 22 Dec-28 Feb; imm Baiting Hollow SUFF 28 Nov-22 Jan (J. Levin).
PILEATED WOODPECKER: PRGC 31 Jan (CF, SA, BC, MN), *intro.*

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: CP 12 Dec thru (AP); Bridgehampton thru; CSCC 27 Dec; Calverton 11 Jan (RB & RF); van Cortlandt Pk 10-11 Feb (TF).
N. Shrike: FBF 4 Dec thru (JGl); Cedar Beach 6 Dec (KF); SICC 17 Dec; Calverton 28 Dec-8 Jan (ES, CF, S. Sime).
Fish Crow: max 460 CPCC 18 Dec.
COMMON RAVEN: 2 NNCBC 17 Dec; 2 Upper West Side, Manhattan 22 Dec-21 Jan; 2 JBWE 22 Dec (K&SF); 2 Hampton Bays SUFF 2 Jan-24 Feb; 2 COR 28 Jan-2 Feb (ACi); Rocky Pt 4 Feb (J. Osterlund); PBP 10 Feb-thru (RA), nest built by 24 Feb; Hicksville NASS 26 Feb (K. O'Leary); Mill Pond Bellmore 27 Feb (SS); *intro.*

Tree Swallow: 1 BKCC 17 Dec; 3 JBWE 27 Feb (K&SF), possibly early migrants.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: scarce.
House Wren: KP 10 Dec; 3 NNCBC 17 Dec; SICC 17 Dec; Seatuck 18 Dec; Watermill 18 Dec; Weld Sanctuary SUFF 23-27 Dec (BBk); Plum Island 31 Dec (MLL).
SEDGE WREN: Orient Beach SP 31 Dec-11 Jan (S. Biasetti, A. Virgin).
Marsh Wren: several in Dec; max 3 Nissequogue R 27 Dec; 3 ORCC 31 Dec; 2 JBWR 28 Jan (R. Campos).
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Coney I. Creek KING 4 Dec (PD, M. Yuan, C. Eliot).
E. Bluebird: max 12 CSP 4 Dec (SA).
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD: Hulse Landing Rd Calverton SUFF 26 Dec-10 Jan (D. Teta, L. Swenson), *intro.*
Am. Robin: 2401 HP 17 Dec (HDM*et al*), going to roost, with 1000+ on14 Jan (AnW).
Am. Pipit: max14 Fort Tilden, QUEE 1 Dec (DG); scarce.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: JBWE 22-23 Jan (BB); FBF 18-19 Jan (RJ, *et al*).
Ovenbird: BP cont with 2 noted 12 Dec-29 Dec (BCa), & 1 thru 11 Jan; RSP 1 Dec (fide TF).
Black-and-white Warbler: BBG 13 Dec-18 Jan (E. Taylor); ORCC 31 Dec.
Orange-crowned Warbler: thru 18 Jan PPk; Canarsie Beach Pk, KING 1 Dec (DG); CP 1 Dec-3 Jan (fide TF); Hook Pond 4 Dec (SSM, PJL); Babylon SUFF 6 Dec (K&SF); 2 Cedar Beach 10 Dec (JGl); 3 KP 10 Dec, with 2 on 6 Jan, and 1 thru 25 Feb; Swindler Cove Pk NEWY 10 Dec-9 Jan (BCa), 2 on 6-8 Jan (JD); NNCBC 17 Dec; 5 QUCC 17 Dec; 2 SACC 18 Dec; Ft Tryon Pk NEWY 18 Dec (TF, C. Dubin); PBP 26 Dec (SW); SPCP 27 Dec (DG, SBl, SB, DH), 1 of 3 on CSCC; SNCC 1 Jan; Shinn 5 Jan; Jones Beach St Pk 15 Jan; Patchogue Lk SUFF 27-28 Feb (DG, SA), *intro.*
Nashville Warbler: Canarsie Beach Pk 1 Dec (DG); RSP 1 Dec (fide TF); KP 10-18 Dec; Ft Tryon Pk 18 Dec (TF, C. Dubin, A. Messer); MiPd 27 Dec; Inwood Hill Pk 6-7 Jan (C. Wilkinson, *et al*); Bronx Zoo 17 Jan (T. Olson); Alley Pond Park 26-28 Jan (E. Miller), *intro.*
Com. Yellowthroat: RSP 1 Dec (fide TF); Peter's Pond, Bridgehampton SUFF 4 Dec (SM, PJL); 50th st & 6th Ave NEWY 12 Dec (BCa), 2 on 14 Dec (TF); Highline (mid 20s) NEWY 14 Dec (G. Willow); SICC 17 Dec; Sagaponack SUFF 18 Dec (AnW); 2 Bryant Park 18-25 Dec (A. Bondi), 1 to 3 Jan; SNCC 1 Jan; BPt 23 Feb (DG, *et al*).
Am. Redstart: BBG 13-16 Dec (RB).
N. Parula: Silver Lake RICH 28 Feb (CB) thru.
Yellow Warbler: Marine Park KING 29 Dec (P. Colen, ph), *intro.*
Black-throated Blue Warbler: Lazy Point Napeague 17 Dec (L. Badkin, ph) thru, *intro.*
Palm Warbler: >10 rep Dec, but only 3 thereafter; JBWE 20 Jan (AC); Alley Pond Park 25 Jan (ABk); Owl's Head Wasterwater Treatment Plant KING 20 Feb (JGl).
Pine Warbler: CSP 4 Dec (SA); NNCBC 17 Dec; Fire Island SUFF 18 Dec; 2 SACC 18 Dec; SMSP 27 Dec; 3 CSCC 27 Dec; ORCC 31 Dec; SNCC 1 Jan; Calverton 7 Jan (DR); East Northport SUFF 13 Jan thru (V. Schiappa); 1 Quogue Ref SUFF 21 Jan, 2 on 22 Jan (PP, KF); COR 21 Feb thru (ACi); Patchogue Lk SUFF 27-28 Feb (DG, SA).
Yellow-rumped "Audubon's" Warbler: SMSP 11 Jan-27 Feb (SSM, PJL), *intro.*
Prairie Warbler: CP 1-2 Dec (fide TF).
GRACE'S WARBLER: PL 1-4 Jan (DG, ABk), first State record when accepted by NYSARC, *intro.*
Black-throated Green Warbler: Inwood Hill Pk 31 Dec-6 Jan (G. Savaresse).
Yellow-breasted Chat: BP thru 16 Jan, with 2 from 3 Dec-2 Jan (B.Wilson), 1 found dead on 3 Jan (SB, N. Sly); Gardiner Park, W. Bayshore SUFF 3 Dec (SSM); East Meeox thru 11 Dec (SSM, PJL); Peter's Pond, Bridgehampton 4 Dec (SSM); MP 12 Dec (MH, ES), 18 Feb; Amagansett 17 Dec; 2 QWCC 17 Dec; 4 SACC 18 Dec; ORCC 31 Dec; Orient Pt 6 Jan (MH, ES); Fort Wadsworth RICH 16 Jan (CB); Union Sq Pk NEWY 7 Jan thru (JD); Montauk SUFF 3 Feb (VB); Hempstead Lk St Pk NASS 14 Feb thru (B.Anderson).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: many in Dec and early Jan; Rocky Point 18 Feb (RRK).
Clay-colored Sparrow: Amagansett 17 Dec-3 Jan (HDM, *et al*), *intro.*
Vesper Sparrow: Fire Island 18 Dec; CSP 3 Feb (DK).
Lark Sparrow: Montauk 5-7 Feb (J. Griswold, *et al*).
"Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow: max 4 SPCP 27 Dec (DG, SBl, SB, DH).
Nelson's Sparrow: none.
Saltmarsh Sparrow: BKCC 17 Dec; Shinn 11 Feb (PD, *et al*).
Seaside Sparrow: 2 Shinn 4 Dec; BKCC 17 Dec; Heckscher St P SUFF 18 Dec; SPCP 27 Dec (DG, SBl, SB, DH).

Lincoln's Sparrow: Staten Island 3 Dec (SIW); BP thru 5 Jan (BCa); PRGC 17 Dec-5 Feb (BC).
White-crowned Sparrow: widely scattered, small numbers; Union Sq P 4 Jan-18 Feb (P PSc).
Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: Staten Island 21 Jan thru (L. Manne, RRV, ph).
Indigo Bunting: CP 29 Dec (fide TF).
PAINTED BUNTING: f PRGC 17 Dec-18 Jan (BC).
Dickcissel: Inwood Hill Pk 18 Dec-25 Jan (JK); Brentwood 25 Dec (JGl); Staten Island 13 Dec thru (L Manne, RRV); imm f Mastic Beach 22 Jan (S. Swain, CSt).
Rusty Blackbird: max 28 Arshamomaque Pres SUFF 15 Jan (RRK); 28 NYBG 12 Feb (DB).
Com. Grackle: max 1600 Southold SUFF 23 Dec (JSp).
Boat-tailed Grackle: 119 SNCC 1 Jan, of which 92 Tobay Sanctuary NASS (HDM).
Baltimore Oriole: CP 1-28 Dec (fide TF); MP 4 Dec (HM, PMP); KP 10 Dec; BBG 14 Dec (O. Tilevitz), 2 BKCC 17 Dec; Amagansett 17 Dec (HDM); 2 QUCC 18 Dec; SMSP 21 Dec (BBk); Montauk 20-22 Feb (fide VB, ph).
Purple Finch: 3 Fort Tilden 1 Dec (DG); 10 QWCC 17 Dec; NNCC 17 Dec.
White-winged Crossbill: Prospect Pk KING 1 Feb (A. Welz).
Com. Redpoll: Tiana Beach 24 Jan (G. Tudor).
Pine Siskin: 15 Staten Island 2 Dec (ACi); 3 SPCP 27 Dec (fide DG); MP 29 Jan (SSM, PJL); CP 29 Jan (PA, PSc).
Am. Goldfinch: max 135 Fort Tilden 1 Dec (DG).

EXOTICS

Chukar: Flushing Meadow Park 3 Dec (JK, N. Souirgi).
Mitred Parakeet: 10 FP 5 Dec (J. Loscalzo, MN); 11 Kew Gardens QUEE 13 Dec (fide SA).
European Goldfinch: CSP 2-4 Dec (K&SF).

ADDENDA

Double-crested Cormorant: 4290 Georgica to Mecox 30 Oct (HDM).
Long-billed Dowitcher: Scuttlehole Rd, Bridgehampton 3 Nov (HDM).
Hooded Warbler: m Ross School, East Hampton SUFF 9 Oct (HDM).
Clay-colored Sparrow: Southampton Village SUFF 17 Oct (B.Wilson).

STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

Regional rarities appear in BOLD; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. In species accounts: number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! – details seen by Regional Editor; ad – adult; Alt – Alternate plumage; Am. – American; arr – arrival or first of season; BBS - Breeding Bird Survey; BOTS – bird of the season; CBC – Christmas Bird Count; CO – confirmed nesting; Com. – Common; E. – Eastern; FL – fledgling; FY – adult feeding young; I – Island; imm – immature; *intro* – see introduction to report; juv – juvenile; L – Lake; max – maximum; mob – multiple observers; N. – Northern; NYSDEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NWR – National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC – report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P – park; Pd – Pond; ph – photographed; Pt – Point; Res – Reservoir; Ri – River; SP – State Park; spm – specimen; subad – subadult; T – Town of; thru – throughout period; Twn – township; W. – Western; WMA – Wildlife Management Area; y – young.

REPORTING REGIONS

Regional boundaries coincide with county lines, except at:

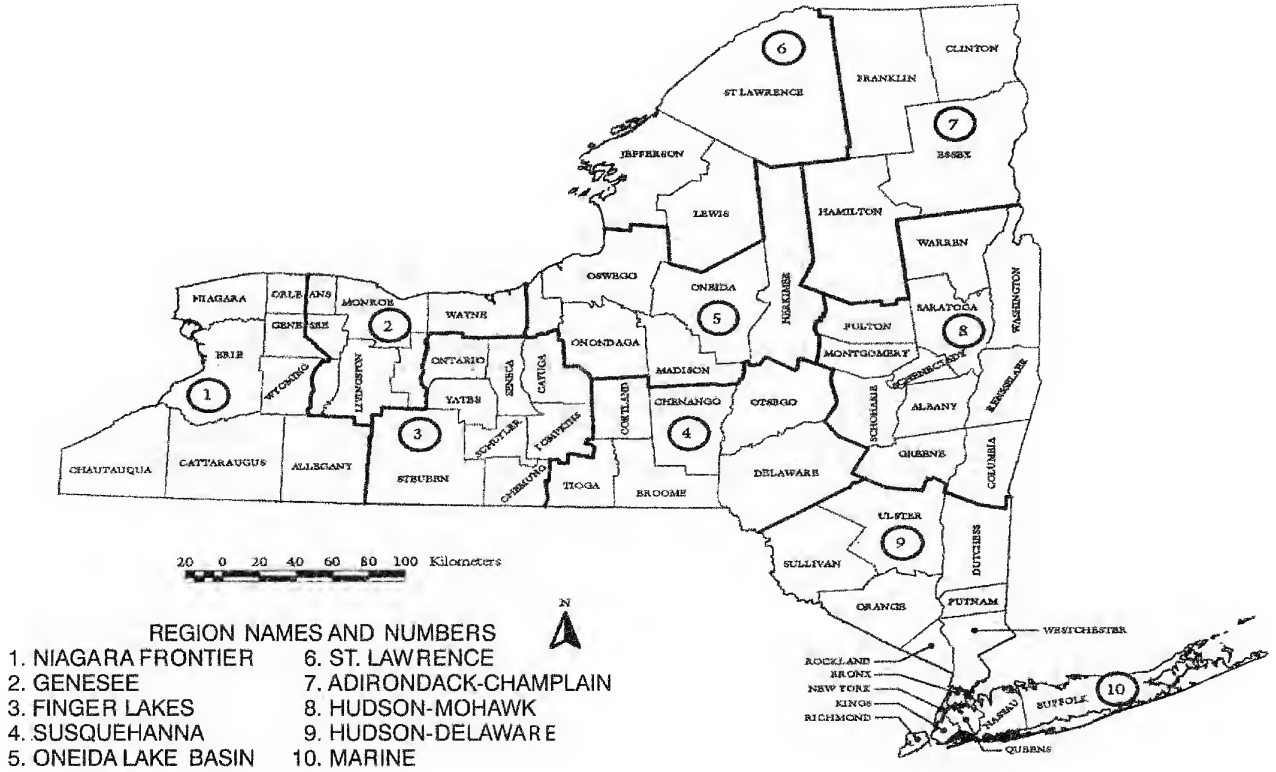
Region 1-Region 2 in Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties:
the boundary is NY Route 98 from Pt. Breeze to Batavia; NY Route 63 from Batavia to Pavilion, and NY Route 19 from Pavilion to the Allegany County line.

Region 2-Region 3 in Ontario County:
the boundary is Mud Creek to NY Route 64, NY Route 64 from Bristol Center to S. Bristol Springs, and Route 21 from S. Bristol Springs to the Yates County line.

Region 3-Region 5 in Cayuga County:
the boundary is NY Route 31.

REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February
Deadline is 7 March
Spring Season: March, April, May
Deadline is 7 June
Summer Season: June, July, August
Deadline is 7 September
Fall Season: September, October, November
Deadline is 7 December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1. NIAGARA FRONTIER
2. GENESEE
3. FINGER LAKES
4. SUSQUEHANNA
5. ONEIDA LAKE BASIN
6. ST. LAWRENCE
7. ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN
8. HUDSON-MOHAWK
9. HUDSON-DELAWARE
10. MARINE

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